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UNCONQUERED: AN EPISODE OF 1914.¹

BY MAUD DIVER.

'The stars are threshed and the souls are threshed from their husks.'

BLAKE.

CHAPTER I.

'Whom does love concern save the lover and the beloved? Yet its impact deluges a thousand shores.'

E. M. FORSTER.

SIR MARK FORSYTH pushed back his chair, left the dinner-table, and strolled over to the bay window. He drew out his cigarette-case, but apparently forgot to open it. He stood there, looking out across the garden, that merged into rocky spaces of heather and bracken, and culminated in an abrupt descent to the loch. Low above the darkening hills the sunset splendour flamed along the horizon, and all the waters beneath were alight with the transient glory. But the man's face wore the abstracted air of one who dwells upon an inner vision. Though the subdued flow of talk behind him entered his ears, it did not seem to reach his brain. 'Bobs,' his devoted Irish terrier, crept out from under the table and, joining his master, made sundry infallible bids for attention, without success.

Presently alluring whiffs of cigarette smoke, intruding on his dreams, reminded Sir Mark of the unopened case in his hand.

'I vote for coffee on the terrace, Mother,' he said, turning his eyes from the glory without to the dimness of the unlighted dining-room. 'Then we'll have the boats out. There's going to be an afterglow and a half presently.'

'I told Grant about the coffee two minutes ago, dear,' Lady Forsyth answered, smiling; but her eyes dwelt a little anxiously on the silhouetted view of her son's profile, as he set a match to his cigarette. The straight, outstanding nose and square chin vividly recalled his dead father. But the imaginative brow was of her

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bestowing, and a splash of light on his hair showed the reddish chestnut tint of her own people: the tint she loved.

'Come along, children,' she added, including in that category four out of her five guests—two girls, unrelated to herself, Ralph Melrose, a Gurkha subaltern, and Maurice Lenox, an artist friend of Mark's.

Keith Macnair, professor of philosophy—his rugged face lined with thought, his dark hair lightly frosted at the temples—was the only genuine grown-up of her small house-party. A connection of her own, and devoted to both mother and son, he was so evenly placed between them in the matter of age that he could play elder brother to Mark or younger brother to Lady Forsyth as occasion required. And, whenever professional claims permitted, occasion usually did require his presence, in some capacity, either at Wynchcombe Friars or Inverraig. Between times, he lived and lectured and wrote philosophical books in Edinburgh, having been a Fellow of the University since his graduate days: and never, if he could help it, did he fail to spend most of the long vacation at Inverraig.

When the party rose from the table he joined Mark in the window: and as the two girls stood back to let Lady Forsyth pass out, she slipped an arm round each. Her love of youth and young things seemed to deepen with her own advancing years. But she had her preferences; and it was the arm round Sheila Melrose that tightened as they passed through the long drawing-room to the terrace, where coffee was set upon a low stone table in full view of the illumined lake and sky.

'It's splendid to have you safe back again, child,' she said, releasing Monica Videlle and drawing Sheila down to the seat beside her. 'India's monopolised you quite long enough. There's some mysterious magnetism about that country. People seem to catch it like a disease. And I was getting alarmed lest you might succumb to the infection.'

Miss Melrose smiled thoughtfully at the sunset. 'I'm not sure that I haven't succumbed already!' she said in her low, clear-cut voice. 'I have vague tempting dreams of going back with Ralph when his furlough is up; or with Mona, to help doctor her Indian women. But probably they'll never materialise——'

'More than probably, if I have any say in the matter!'

Lady Forsyth spoke lightly, but under the lightness lurked a note of decision. She had her own private dreams concerning this girl with the softly shining eyes under level brows, and the

softly resolute lips that never seemed quite to leave off smiling even in repose.

At mention of India Miss Videlle's thoughtful face came suddenly to life. 'It would be just lovely for me,' she said. 'Too good to be true!'

'Never mind, Miss Videlle,' Maurice consoled her almost tenderly. 'This ripping evening's not too good to be true. And I can put you up to some tips for squaring Lady Forsyth—in strict confidence of course!'

He bent towards her with a slightly theatrical offer of his arm, and they moved off to a seat near the ivy-covered wall, looking towards the distant rapids.

Lady Forsyth glanced after them with a passing twinge of concern.

The girl—a fairly recent acquisition of Sheila's—was shy and clever, with a streak of dark blood in her veins. She had done brilliantly at Oxford, and was now qualified to take up the medical work in India on which she had set her heart. Sheila had acquired her while going through a course of massage and magnetic healing, for which she showed so distinct a gift that she had serious thoughts of taking it up in earnest. A vague idea of going out with Monica had been simmering in her brain for the past week; but she had not spoken of it till to-night.

'Wonder what's come to old Mark,' mused Ralph pensively, stirring his coffee. 'Thought this picnic arrangement was all for his benefit—'

'Rather so!' Mark's voice answered him, as he and Macnair strolled round the corner of the house. 'Hurry up with the coffee, Mums. I love dabbling my oars in the sunset. Lenox, old chap, you two might go on ahead and give the word.'

They went on readily enough; and the rest soon followed them through the wilder spaces of the garden, down rocky steps to the bay, where sand and rough grass shelved gently to the water's edge. Here they found two boats already afloat, with Maurice and Monica—she was commonly called Mona—established in one of them.

Lady Forsyth, nothing if not prompt, privately consigned Ralph to that boat, Mark and Keith to her own. It was a heavenly evening, and she thanked goodness they were going to have it to themselves: quite a rare event since Maurice Lenox had discovered that superfluous Miss Alison.

'Coming to row stroke for us?' she asked as Mark handed her in.

He shook his head, smiling down at her.

'That's to be Keith's privilege! I'm for the other boat.' But neither his smile nor the light pressure of her arm could atone for the refusal.

'Pointed and purposeless,' she denounced it mentally; but within a very few moments his purpose was revealed.

'Down stream a bit first, Keith,' he called out, as he pushed off his own boat and sprang lightly in. 'I want to run up to the village. Miss Alison and her friend might like to join us.'

So they rowed down stream at his command: and for Lady Forsyth the pleasure of the outing was gone; the peace and beauty of the evening spoilt by fierce resentment against these intrusive strangers who had no authorised position in the scheme of things. And her natural vexation was intensified by concern for Sheila: though whether the girl took Mark's sudden and strange defection seriously it was impossible to tell. She wore that smiling, friendly graciousness of hers like a bright veil, that seemed to baffle attempts at intimacy, while it enhanced her charm. Even with Lady Forsyth, who loved her as a daughter, she had her reserves, notably on matters nearest her heart.

'After all, she knows the real Mark almost as well as I do,' Mark's mother reflected by way of consolation. 'And she's wiser than I am, in many ways, though she is nearly thirty years younger. I'm probably racing on miles too fast. He's barely known the girl a fortnight. He *couldn't* be so crazy—— All the same, he's no business to—it's distracting!' she concluded, her irritation flaming up again at sight of the two figures that were now approaching the shore, escorted by Mark.

Miss Alison, the taller one, had unquestionably height and grace to recommend her. Mark, who stood six feet in his socks, could barely give her a couple of inches; and the languid deliberation of her movements had, on Lady Forsyth, the same maddening effect as a drawl in speech. Her own brain and body were too quick, in the original sense of the word, not to make her a trifle intolerant towards the 'half-alive'; and, rightly or wrongly, Miss Alison was apt to produce that impression even on her admirers, though no doubt they expressed it differently.

Personal prejudice apart, Lady Forsyth preferred the girl's companion, Miss O'Neill, in spite of her wrong-headed zeal for the Suffrage and Home Rule. Had Bel Alison been out in search of a foil, she could have discovered none better than this big-hearted,

fanatical woman of five-and-thirty, shortish and squarely built, with an upward nose, an ugly, humorous mouth, and a quantity of rough brown hair in a chronic state of untidiness. Lady Forsyth gathered that she was an active philanthropist, and that the incongruous pair shared a flat somewhere in Earl's Court. To outward seeming they had certainly nothing beyond the same address in common.

If Bel's movements were over-deliberate, Miss O'Neill's were apt to be sudden ; and she strode into the boat with the decision of one given to putting her foot down to some purpose.

'Steady on! You evidently don't do things by halves!'

Sir Mark remonstrated, laughing, and consigning her to a cushion in the bows. Bel had already usurped Maurice's seat astern, and Mark rowed stroke—this time without need of invitation. Then they turned about and moved slowly up the loch, dabbling their oars in the sunset fires and shivering the purple shadows of the hills.

And if for Helen Forsyth the pleasure of the evening was over, for Mark it had but just begun. And she knew it. Therein lay the sting. Though 'the boy' was now very much a man, she could honestly have said, two weeks ago, that nothing beyond minor differences and mutual flashes of temper had marred the deep essential unity of their relation—a unity the more inestimably precious since he was now all she had left of her nearest and dearest on earth. Husband, daughter and younger son had all passed on before her into the Silence, and of her own people one brother alone remained. At the moment he was Governor of New Zealand, and seemed disposed to stay on there indefinitely when his term of office expired. The Empire, he wrote, was a saner, sweeter, more spacious place of abode than twentieth-century England, which seemed temporarily given over to the cheap-jack, the specialist, and the party politician. And she—while loving every foot of her husband's country and her own—understood too well the frequent disappointment of those who came, on rare and hardly earned leave, from the ends of the earth and failed to find, in picture-palaces and music-halls, in the jargon of Futurists and demagogues, the England of their dreams.

For this cause, her sole remaining brother had become little more than a memory and a monthly letter. Yet could she never account herself a lonely woman, while she had Keith for friend and mentor, Mark for son, and Sheila for—more than possible—daughter.

What business had this unknown girl to step into their charmed circle and unsettle the very foundation of things? Never, till to-night, had it seemed possible to Mark's mother that she could arrive at dreading the fulfilment of his heart's desire. Yet that was what it amounted to. Dread lurked behind her surface irritation. The touch of second sight in her composition made her vaguely conscious of danger in the air. Small wonder if she anathematised Maurice Lenox for his knack of picking up promiscuous strangers, and, in this case, aggravating his offence by failing to appropriate his own discovery.

CHAPTER II.

Quand on vous voit, on vous aime; quand on vous aime, où vous voit-on?

For a while the two boats kept in touch, so that talk passed easily between them. Miss Alison spoke little. Silence rather became the fair pensive quality of her charm—and probably she knew it. The uncharitable supposition was Lady Forsyth's: and she was fain to confess that pensiveness and silence harmonised well with the fine, straight nose, the mass of dull gold hair, and eyes of that transparent blue which lacks warmth and depth, yet has a limpid beauty of its own, especially where the pupils are large and the lashes noticeably long.

Mark, too, had fallen silent: the worst possible sign. But Miss O'Neill atoned for all deficiencies by discoursing vigorously to Maurice's swaying shoulders, upon the latest developments of the suffrage campaign. Maurice, equal to any emergency, had no difficulty in airing his own views on the subject—as it were, through the back of his head—to one who had hammered shop windows with her own hand, though she graciously drew the line at firing churches and wrecking trains. Yet she was a woman of generous and, at times, noble impulses. The greater part of her small annuity was lavished on a very personal form of rescue work—and on Bel.

'It's rank injustice, say what you please,' she declared in her strong, vibrant tones, 'to imprison and torture poor misguided girls who have the courage of the faith that's in them. The real blame lies on the heads of those who've *driven* us to extremes.'

'That sounds very fine, Miss O'Neill, but I'm afraid it won't hold water,' Macnair put in quietly from the other boat. 'It has

been the standing excuse of fanatics and—dare I add?—criminals all down the ages. Your latest forms of argument will simply harden and justify opposition to a cause that is not without certain elements of justice and right.'

His pleasant voice had the clear, leisured enunciation of the scholar, a quality peculiarly exasperating to the red-hot enthusiast whose thoughts are, in the main, emotions intellectually expressed. 'Justice and right indeed!' Miss O'Neill fairly hurled the words at him. 'That's all we're asking, isn't it? And precisely what we'll never be getting under a man-made Government and man-made laws.'

Macnair smiled and shrugged his shoulders. He had no mind to let argument and recrimination desecrate the peace and glowing beauty of a Highland summer evening; and with practised ease he slid into the calmer waters of generalisation, as much in the hope of weaning Lady Forsyth from troubled thoughts as for the pleasure of expressing his own.

'The truth is,' he said, resting on his oars, while the boats drifted into a luminous bay, 'every age, like every country, has its moral microbe; and the microbe of this one is "Down with everything"; "Can't; won't; shan't; don't; Pass it along the line," that's about the tune of it, in all ranks. Kipling may or may not be a classic poet, but his "Commissariat Camels" put the present-day spirit into a nutshell. For nearly a hundred years the world has been fed on a steady diet of revolt; and now we have the climax, distaste for duties and clamour for rights. The fine, brave old wisdom of acceptance is altogether out of court—'

Mark, withdrawing his gaze from Miss Alison's profile, treated him to a smile of amused approval. 'Why this sudden access of eloquence, old man?' he asked; and Keith deliberately winked over his shoulder.

'Miss O'Neill there's to blame; and the modern world does seem rather egregiously modern when one's been living for months in a backwater with Pindar for company.'

'Oh Keith, have you really found time for your promised translation of the "Odes"?' Lady Forsyth—herself a translator of some distinction—leaned eagerly forward.

'I've been making time for a few of them,' he answered, pleased with the success of his diversion, 'by neglecting my Bergson book.'

'Have you got them here?'

'Yes. They're in type, awaiting your consideration!'

'Good. You'll publish them, of course.'

He shook his head. 'Not even to please you! I've simply been enjoying myself, exploring a little deeper into the heart of an old friend; one who could look life in the face without feeling convinced that he personally could have made a better job of it. One suspects even our poets, these days, of being propagandists in disguise. Pindar is as sublime and as useless as a snow-peak; and one can no more convey the essence of him in English than one could convey the scent of a rose in Parliamentary language! Yet one is fool enough to try.'

Sheila, who had been listening with her quiet intentness, remarked softly, 'Why don't we all learn Greek?'

'Because the humanities are out of court in an age of scientific materialism. Wasn't there a promise, once, that I should teach *you*?'

The girl flushed with pleasure. 'I thought you'd forgotten.'

'And I thought Miss Videlle had persuaded you to give up everything for this massage you're so keen about.'

Their talk took a more personal tone, and Lady Forsyth's attention strayed again towards the other boat. It had drifted a little farther off, and a change of seats was in progress between Mark and Miss Videlle. One moment his tall figure loomed against the dying splendour; the next, he sank cautiously down beside Miss Alison, who vouchsafed him a side-long glance of welcome.

'We're moving on a bit, Mother,' he sang out, seeing her face turned in their direction.

They moved on accordingly: and it did not occur to Lady Forsyth that Miss O'Neill, sitting alone in the bows, obscured from vision of the disturbing pair, was in much the same mood as herself. Lonely, passionate, and emotional, her thwarted womanhood had found in Bel Alison an object on which she could lavish at once the protective tenderness of a mother and the devoted service of a man. Unhappily, this last included a consuming jealousy of those who had a better natural right to the girl than herself. Diligently and skilfully, therefore, she had scattered seeds of prejudice against the unjust half of creation—which, by the way, she very much appreciated in units, while denouncing it in the mass. By way of a more positive deterrent, her slender means were taxed to the utmost that Bel might have cushions and flowers and curtains to suit her fastidious taste. No one, least of all Miss Alison, suspected the extent of her secret shifts and sacrifices. And, intermittently, she had her reward. But no skill n self-deception could blind her

to the fact that her lavish devotion was as dust in the balance against the passing attentions of a baronet, lord of two estates, and a fine-looking fellow to boot. To-night the conviction rankled with peculiar keenness by reason of her suppressed irritation with Macnair.

'Shirking the issue. Just like a man!' she soliloquised wrathfully. 'And dragging in his own trumpery translations by the heels. The conceit of the creatures! And the folly of them. Wasting good abilities over the vapourings of a musty old Greek poet. Blind as a bat, or simply not caring a snap that the world's crammed with evils crying out to be reformed. Let them cry, so long as *he* can scribble in peace . . .'

At this point her somewhat chaotic thoughts were interrupted by music from the other end of the boat. Mark was singing Wallace's lullaby, 'Son of Mine'; half crooning it, at first, for the benefit of Miss Alison, who did not know it. But as the strong swing of the melody took hold of him, he let out his voice to the full—a true, clear baritone; music in its every cadence; and something more than music, for those who had ears to hear.

Harry, raging inwardly, heard, and understood very well that the days of her own dominion were numbered. Lady Forsyth understood equally well; but she had passed beyond the raging mood. The song was an old favourite; every note of it laden with associations; and in spite of herself tears started to her eyes.

As for Mark, others might understand or not as they pleased. He was singing to an audience of one; to the girl who sat beside him, her uncovered head lifted and half turned away toward the dark sweeping curves of the hills.

When the murmur of applause died down she turned to him with the slow lift of her lashes that, conscious or no, thrilled him afresh at each repetition. 'I didn't know you could sing like that,' she said softly.

'I can't always,' he answered, flushing under her implied praise. 'Sometimes—it just takes hold of me. Don't you sing yourself? I'm sure you've got music in you.'

She suppressed a small sigh. 'Oh yes. It's one of my poor little half-fledged talents; useless for want of proper development. My elder sister's the clever one, and *she* got all the chances. She found me convenient sometimes for duets.'

'Duets? Good. I know plenty. Let's have a try. What was her line?'

'Classical. Mostly German.'

Mark was silent a moment, raking his memory. Then he had an inspiration. 'Mendelssohn's "I would that the love" . . . ? Wasn't that the sort of thing?'

'Yes. Very much so.'

'Right! We'll give them a treat. You take the air.'

She shook her head. 'You're going much too fast. I never said I'd sing; and—I've rather forgotten the words.'

'You won't slip out of it that way!' he told her; and leaning close he crooned under his breath: "'I would that the love I bear thee, My lips in one word could say; That soft word——"'

'Oh yes, I remember now,' she cut him short rather abruptly; but a faint colour showed in her cheeks and this time she did not lift her lashes. 'Very pretty, but drenched with sentiment. That's the worst of German songs.'

'Well, you can't beat the music of 'em,' he persisted, rebuffed a little by her tone, and hoping it was assumed for the benefit of Miss Videlle, who was most vexatiously in the way. 'I'm set on it anyhow. Are you ready?'

Taking her smile for consent he moved one hand, beating time in the air; then, without preliminary, their united voices took up the song. Bel's, though sweet and true within its range, proved too slight an organ to stand the open-air test, and Mark had need to moderate his full-toned alto accordingly, thereby giving an added effect of tenderness to words and music already sufficiently expressive.

And again Lady Forsyth—a most unwilling listener—understood everything far too well. Deliberately she hardened herself against the appeal of the music. For this time she was simply angry—angry as she had never yet been with her son; though, needless to say, she attributed his egregious behaviour entirely to Miss Alison.

'How can he? How dare he!' was the cry of her pained heart. 'So unlike him. An insult to Sheila. Flinging his folly in her face.'

But Sheila was drawing her finger-tips lightly through the water, watching the effect with that shadowy smile of hers, and to all appearances simply enjoying the song. Almost Lady Forsyth found herself hoping that it was so. In any case, she was thankful when the 'exhibition' ended, and Maurice's cheerful voice was heard calling out: 'Your turn, Miss Videlle! Can't you give us a music-hall masterpiece by way of diversion?'

But Miss Videlle disowned all knowledge of masterpieces, music-hall or otherwise, and Maurice himself came nobly to the rescue.

'I'm not up to Mark's style; but I'm top-hole at genuine Harry Lauders,' he volunteered with becoming modesty. 'And as you're all so pressing, it would be ungracious to hide my light under a bushel.'

'Good egg!' sang out Ralph from the second boat. 'Give us "Roamin' in the Gloamin'."'

And Maurice, with a deliberate wink at Mark over Miss Videlle's shoulder, proceeded to give it for all he was worth, in the broadest of broad Scotch. But Mark was in no mood to see the joke of a performance that sounded far too like a travesty of his own chosen love-song.

"I kissed her-r twice and I asked her-r once if she would be my br-ride," sang Maurice with insolent gusto, burring his r's like a policeman's rattle; and Mark simply wanted to kick him into the loch.

Lady Forsyth, on the other hand, was privately blessing the boy's foolery, that seemed to clear the air and sent the boats skimming homeward to the swing of chorus on chorus; only her son's voice being conspicuous by its absence. Keith's boat was leading now; and without turning round deliberately she could see nothing of the two who haunted her mind.

This was perhaps fortunate; for Mark's arm lay along the back of the seat, his shoulder was within three inches of Bel's; and under cover of the music they had picked up the dropped thread of their talk in lowered tones that imparted a tender significance to the simplest remark.

'I don't call your singing a half-fledged talent,' he said with a faint stress on the pronoun. 'You've the gift, anyway. Why not make more of it—study, practise?'

She smiled and lifted her shoulders. 'I've tried, but I couldn't keep it up. Laziness, perhaps; I don't know. Vanity, perhaps, a little. I either want to do things splendidly or else—I can't be bothered. I need someone to spur me, to encourage me.'

'Well, I should have thought Miss O'Neill——'

'Harry? Oh yes, she'd lie down and let me walk over her if I wanted to. But she's swamped in "the Cause" and philanthropic work. As for my talents, when I wanted the helping hand it wasn't there; and now—it's too late. I've dabbled first

in one thing and then in another, and frittered away what little ambition I ever had.'

The emotionless quiet of her tone suggested a noble resignation to the general obstructiveness of life; a resignation that, to the man's strenuous spirit, seemed alike pathetic and premature.

'Why, you're only on the threshold of things,' he rebuked her gently. 'What are the talents you've dabbled in? Do tell me.'

'Oh, I've written a little and acted a little. I wanted badly to take that up in earnest. Heavens! Wasn't there a row! So I fell back on the writing. Verses, chiefly.'

'Have they appeared, any of them?'

'A few. Here and there. I was vain enough once to have a booklet printed out of my allowance. Then there was a worse row than ever.'

'But why?'

'Well—they weren't exactly of the pretty-pretty order. And my father's a clergyman: that kind of clergyman.'

'I see.'

He saw her, in fact, a creature of fine sensibilities, striving for self-expression, thwarted, discouraged, and misprized by those who should have been her natural helpers, and his heart went out to her the more.

'May I——' he hesitated. 'Miss Alison, won't you let me see some of your verses?'

'No. Not for the world.' She flushed suddenly and her voice had a tremor in it. It was the first time he had seen her really perturbed.

'I'm sorry,' he began: but she was mistress of herself in a moment and turned the matter off with a laugh.

'We're both making mountains out of molehills! The verses were wretched poor stuff, most of them. Father was quite right to condemn them; but he went the wrong way about it. He usually does. They were just the outcome of—an influence: a passing phase. I hated them myself—afterwards. One does go through phases, doesn't one? At least I do. It's rather interesting. Saves one from the bottomless pit of boredom, the only thing we're really afraid of nowadays.' She made the statement in all seriousness. 'But—looking back—one sometimes wonders how much that other girl was really me?'

He did not answer at once; partly because he was trying not

to be aware that while she spoke there had blown through him a chill breeze of doubt: an unwelcome reminder that after all he knew nothing as yet of her life, her antecedents, or—if it came to that—of herself. He only knew that almost from the first moment of contact she had put a spell upon him that he had neither the power nor the will to resist.

‘Do I seem to be talking utter nonsense?’ she asked suddenly in a changed voice; and doubt fled like a wraith at sunrise.

‘Rather not. I was only hoping—that this *is* the real you. I’m not simply a phase—am I?—like all the rest?’

At that she turned to him with the lazy uplift of her lashes, and the astonishing blue of her eyes flashed on him like a light.

‘Isn’t it—rather too soon to tell?’

‘*Is* it?’ he challenged her boldly, and exulted to see the blood rise in her cheeks. More than that he could not achieve. For another Lauder chorus had just died down and they were nearing the shore.

‘Look here,’ he said, low and rapidly. ‘I am off up the loch to-morrow in my little steam yacht—fishing. Come along too—will you?’

She gave him a reproachful look. ‘I can’t. You know I can’t.’

‘Oh, well, bring your police dog along if you must; and I’ll get Lenox to make a square. Will that do?’

‘Yes. I’ll ask Harry. If it is like to-day—it’ll be lovely.’

‘Better than to-day, I hope,’ he muttered, wondering very much if he could wait till then, and cursing the wire entanglements of convention.

‘I’m going to see you home,’ he announced as he handed her out of the boat, and repeated his intention when all the party was ashore. ‘Good night, Mums,’ he added, laying a hand on his mother’s shoulder. ‘Lenox is coming along with me. Leave things open for us, will you?’

‘Very well, dear; don’t be too late,’ she said, looking up at him; but between the gathering dusk and his own preoccupation he missed the mute appeal of her eyes.

During the short walk back to the village, Miss O’Neill took complete command of affairs. Having at last recovered her treasure, she slipped a retaining hand through Bel’s arm, and never a chance had Mark of another intimate word.

She graciously fell in with the morrow's plan, however; and afterwards, as the men strolled back, smoking, to Inverraig, Maurice was frankly informed what would be expected of him on the occasion. Mark betrayed his repressed excitability by speaking rather more rapidly and abruptly than usual.

'I'm running this show altogether—you understand? We're not going off on a blooming picnic to play consequences. No nonsense, mind. And no Harry Lauder—confound you! All you and Miss O'Neill are required to do is to make yourselves scarce. Fact is, you're only there because I couldn't get—Miss Alison to come alone.'

Maurice smiled broadly. 'I gathered as much. But I say, Forsyth,' he hesitated and took a pull at his pipe, 'do you really mean business?'

'Rather so. What kind of a cad d'you take me for?' snapped Mark, whose temper was quick at the best of times. 'Think I'd play the fool with a girl like that?'

'Sorry, old chap. Didn't intend to rile you. Only, to a mere outsider, it seems just a trifle precipitate. Besides—one naturally thought—'

'Oh, dry up. Nobody asked you to think.'

There was pain as well as anger in Mark's tone. He knew very well what Maurice thought—what others were likely to think: and although Lady Forsyth did not guess it, his sensitiveness on Sheila's account almost equalled her own. It hurt him horribly that by any act of his he should seem to cast even the slightest slur on her. And he saw no reason. For years they had been like brother and sister. Certainly, since her return from India he had caught himself wondering— But before wonder could crystallise into belief, Bel had arisen in her moonlight beauty and all the stars of heaven had suffered eclipse. Come to think of it, he owed young Lenox a debt he could never repay; and for the rest of the way he made royal atonement for his flash of temper.

'Good night, old chap,' he said when they reached the house. 'I'm not turning in just yet.'

And for more than half an hour he paced the terrace, wondering, hoping, dreaming; while his mother lay awake in her bedroom above, both windows flung wide, listening to the restless sound of his footsteps; wondering also; and scarcely daring to hope that he had already spoken and been refused.

Not until she heard him come in, at last, and shut the door of his room, did she let her tired body have its way and fall into a troubled sleep.

CHAPTER III.

'You know not the limit of this kingdom, still you are its queen.'

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

MISS O'NEILL, as might be supposed, proved no easy subject for diplomatic manipulation. Long before they had made an end of their picnic-lunch, in a glen of rocks and birches and purple cushions of heather, she had effectually given Mr. Lenox to understand that she was neither to be deceived nor coerced by his tactful attempts to detach her from the other two. Years of pushing and shouldering through obstacles, in the Suffrage campaign, had so far blunted her finer sensibilities that she could smilingly hold her ground even among those who obviously wished her elsewhere: and she held it to-day, till Mark lost patience and frankly took the bull by the horns.

'I say, Miss O'Neill, you might take pity on Lenox and honour him with your company up the glen,' he said; and beneath his engaging tone there lurked a faint note of command. 'He's no fisherman, and he can't keep himself to himself for ten minutes on end. So you see, it would be a real act of charity to remove him.'

'Yes, Sir Mark, I can see *that* without spectacles,' answered the redoubtable Harry, challenging him with her greenish-brown eyes.

'Good business!' Sir Mark retorted unabashed. 'When you reach the high moor you'll be rewarded by a view that's worth some climbing to see. Of course, if Miss Alison would prefer to go with you—'

'Miss Alison's far too comfortable where she is, thanks!' Bel interposed with her deliberate drawl. She had settled herself on a low rock and sat dreamily watching the river, elbows on knees, chin cradled in her hands. Without changing her attitude, she glanced up at Sir Mark and her smile seemed to link them in completest understanding. 'If the necessity for silence becomes too overpowering I can always go to sleep. I'll be as good as gold, Harry dear——' She shifted her gaze to Miss O'Neill's resolute, rebellious face. 'And I think Sir Mark can be trusted not to let me fall into the river!'

The upward jerk of Harry's head implied wholesale distrust of the species; but finding herself cornered she surrendered at discretion. 'Well, Mr. Lenox,' she said, 'since it's a case of obeying orders, we must make the best of each other. This way, I suppose?' She strode on before him up the narrow, stony path; and Maurice, with an abortive grin at Mark, followed in her wake.

Keeping well ahead of him, she toiled on indomitably till trees were dwarfed to bushes and the primeval splendour of the high moors came suddenly into view. Before them, and upon either hand, the heather and the heavens were all. It was as if they stood upon the shore of an amethystine sea, studded with islands of granite and juniper, and shadowed only by slow-moving continents of cloud. For Maurice, with the blood of Eldred and Quita Lenox in his veins, such a vision was among the rare things that could smite him to silence. He drew a great breath and stood very still, his young, expressive face glorified, passingly, by the artist's pure joy in colour, and the Scot's love of the land.

Miss O'Neill, a townswoman by taste and habit, would have preferred a throng of human faces, any day, to the sublime emptiness around them. Hot, breathless, and in a ferment of anxiety, she sank gratefully on to the nearest rock and looked up at her companion; but the light on his face checked her ever-ready tongue. She liked the boy. He was more than 'a mere he-thing,' and that streak of the woman in him appealed strongly to the masculine strain in herself. But protracted silence irked her; and very soon anxiety goaded her into speech.

'Mr. Lenox, how long have you known Sir Mark Forsyth? Are you acquaintances or friends?'

Maurice considered that point without removing his eyes from the heather. 'Rather more than acquaintances, I should say, and on the way to becoming friends. I've known him two years on and off. But I've never yet been to Wynchcombe Friars, his Hampshire place. He's crazy about it. They say you never know the real Forsyth till you've seen him there. I'm going there this autumn, to be converted from Futurism and Experimental Art in general! At least that's his notion. He's a splendid chap. Chock-full of ideas. A bit reactionary, some of them. He's dead against what we should call industrial progress, and what he calls sacrificing the man to the machine. They've got a great scheme on, he and his mother and Macnair, for joining up all the scattered attempts at reviving handicrafts and guilds—'

'Oh, bother their crafts and guilds!' Miss O'Neill broke in with scant ceremony. 'Sheer fads! Result of riches and idleness. I want to know is he the kind of man to take up a girl violently—you see how it's been—just to pass the time?'

'No!' Maurice rapped out the negative with unusual vehemence. 'As a matter of fact, I believe he intends to offer her his

heart and his title and all his worldly goods before we get back to them.'

Miss O'Neill started visibly. 'What—on a fortnight's acquaintance?'

'Yes. A trifle steep, isn't it? And, for a man in his position, a wife's a rather important item.'

'Something more than an amiable housekeeper—is that your meaning?' Miss O'Neill rounded on him, a flash of temper in her eyes. 'I thought better of *you*, Mr. Lenox. But you're all alike in the grain. A man in Sir Mark's position must have a beautiful figure-head for his dinner-table: a graceful, accommodating doll, that he can hang with jewels and silks and satins. But my Bel's no doll-woman, for all her soft manners and sweet temper. No doubt he flatters himself that, in a fortnight, he's read her from cover to cover: and he'll be telling her, sure as fate, that he's the one man on earth to make her happy, and think he's paying her the compliment of her life into the bargain!'

Good-natured Maurice began to feel that Forsyth had been a trifle inconsiderate, saddling him with a virago whom he was quite at a loss how to appease.

'Well—compliment or no, she's free to refuse him,' he remarked soothingly; 'and after all, it's the natural thing.'

Miss O'Neill pounced on the words almost before they were out. '*Of course* it's the natural thing for a man like Sir Mark—spoilt by his mother, one can see with half an eye—to snatch at a beautiful woman. And where does a girl's freedom come in when a man dazzles her brain with extravagant lover's talk? Besides—he's rich. She's poor. It almost amounts to bribery. I hate the whole thing. I came away for her sake, to give her a chance of knowing him better, just in case—— But if it's true, what you say, I shall go straight down again——'

She sprang up from her rock and faced about; but Lenox, smilingly, determined, stood astride across the narrow path.

'Excuse me, Miss O'Neill, not if I can prevent it,' he said. 'Forsyth's going to have his chance fair and square. Of course if you're game for a free fight—well, come on!'

For a second she looked him up and down, a sudden flicker of humour in her eyes. 'I tackled a policeman once. A bigger fellow than you. And he was very glad to get rid of me.'

'I can well believe it,' Maurice answered with becoming gravity. 'But look here, just consider, what earthly good would you do by

deferring the inevitable—say, twenty-four hours—and probably annoying Miss Alison into the bargain ?’

The last shot told. Harry let out her breath in a great sigh. ‘Life’s a bewildering business,’ she mused aloud. But common sense told her he spoke truth ; and she liked him none the less for backing up his friend. ‘Very well, Mr. Lenox, I give it up. You evidently have instructions from head-quarters, and I’ll stay here till you give the word. But scenery bores me stiff ; so please make yourself as interesting as you know how.’

‘Right you are,’ said Maurice ; and indicating her deserted rock he flung himself on the heather at her feet in such a position that her prosaic figure in its knitted coat and rough skirt should not intrude upon his vision of the landscape. Then he proceeded, in his fluent fashion, to enlarge on the subject uppermost in his mind—Sir Mark’s queer conviction that a wide-spread revival of handicrafts and guilds would go far to solve the strike problem by restoring the creative sense in labour and renewing the broken link between art and life——

For Sir Mark himself, at that moment, life held only one purpose, one achievement worthy of serious consideration—the linking of his own destiny with that of the girl who seemed capable of maintaining indefinitely her graceful pose of contemplation. It was a pose that revealed to admirable advantage the long lines of her figure and the beauty of her small head with its close-fitting coils of hair. Her discarded hat lay on the heather at her feet. Close to her chosen rock sprang a young birch, its supple grace a reflection of her own ; its drooping plumes, stirred by the breeze, dappling her blue dress with tiny restless shadows.

Was it some day-dream that so held her, Mark wondered, or pure consideration for the trout that he had presumably come out to catch ? Either way, her silence and abstraction had the effect of so intensifying his own emotion that speech seemed desecration. Besides—he had spoken already. Could there really be any need to tell her again how swiftly and strangely she had swept him from his moorings, so that life held nothing, momentarily, but his glorified vision of herself ? Last night the sound of her voice, echoing his own confession, had silenced, for good, the whispers of prudence that strove to curb his impetuous spirit, counselling delay. If only that confounded Miss O’Neill had given him a chance while the glamour was on them both, the whole thing might

have seemed less egregiously precipitate. Now that he had schemed for half an hour's privacy; now that she sat there, only a few yards away, seemingly unaware of his existence, a shiver of uncertainty chilled him. A fortnight ago to-day, while he and Maurice were rambling in search of subjects, he had beheld her for the first time. For him that fortnight was an indefinable age. For her it might simply be fourteen days——

But this sort of hawing would never do. He was a strong man, not unschooled in suffering, but little used to be thwarted in his desire. And he did not seriously expect to be thwarted now. Deliberately he laid aside his fishing tackle, and leaning on one elbow looked up at the girl, whose rock was set a little higher along the sloping bank of the stream. For a few seconds he took his fill of her, from the coronet of her hair to the seductive curves of her mouth and chin that made such tender atonement for the cool directness of her eyes.

Still she did not move; but her lips parted in a small sigh, and the spell was broken. Mark rose and planted himself before her.

'Miss Alison,' he began—and could get no further.

'Well?' she asked with that distracting lift of her lashes. 'Is the precious tackle out of gear?'

Her coolness almost angered him and gave him sudden command of his tongue. '*Tackle?* D'you really suppose I came out here to catch trout?'

'You said so last night. And you seemed to be making elaborate arrangements——'

'So I was—to get half an hour alone with you,' he announced bluntly, and saw the ghost of a blush creep up under her skin. He wanted simply to take her in his arms without more ado. Instead, he sat down close to the rock, plunged his hands in the heather, and leaned towards her.

'I was trying to tell you last night. Didn't you understand?'

'N-no. I thought the music and—the sentiment had rather carried you away.'

'It was *you* who carried me away. The music was a kind of safety-valve, that's all.' He leaned still nearer. 'Bel—is there a ghost of a chance for me? Is it sheer conceit and impertinence on my part to ask—so soon?'

'No—oh no.' And suddenly she covered her face as if the intensity of his gaze affected her like strong sunlight.

He was silent a moment, watching her and crushing the heather in his strong fingers. Then, very gently, he laid a hand on her knee.

'What is it? Tell me. I *must* know.'

At that she dropped her hands. By chance or design, one of them fell on his own and rested there. The light contact sent electric thrills up his arm.

'That's just it,' she said with her slow smile. 'You must know. But we neither of us do—yet. It's been a wonderful fortnight. And if I haven't travelled quite so fast or so far as you, that doesn't mean——'

'Of course it doesn't. I'm not such a conceited ass as to suppose you could fall in love with me at sight. But now I've spoken—isn't there any response?'

'Haven't you felt any?' she asked lightly, and the hand that rested on his moved in a just perceptible caress.

'For God's sake don't play with me!' he broke out, half angry again. 'I'm in deadly earnest.'

'I know. That's just why one of us must try to keep a cool head.'

'Nonsense! You're simply fencing. And you haven't answered my question.'

'I'm trying to. But I'm half afraid . . . to let myself go. No—don't!' She warded him off with a gesture, but deliberately replaced her hand over his. 'It's too sudden altogether. Wouldn't it be wiser—for both of us—to wait a little? You don't really know me one bit.'

He bowed his head and kissed the fingers that covered his own. 'I know I love you,' he said simply, his deep voice low and controlled. 'And if you can say the same, that's enough for me. The rest will be an enchanted voyage of discovery.'

'Voyages of discovery are rather risky things,' she reminded him. 'And sometimes—they end in smoke. You see, you're not just anyone. I'm outside your world; and—your mother doesn't like me.'

'Nonsense,' he said again, with less conviction than before.

'It isn't. I'm sure she wants you to marry Miss Melrose. And I thought at first—you seem very intimate.'

'Naturally. Our intimacy began when she was eight and I was twelve.' He spoke looking out across the stream. Something in him winced at her allusion to Sheila in that connection. But it

was only fair on her to explain things; and he forced himself to proceed. 'Her people are our nearest neighbours in Hampshire. Her mother's the sort of person who subsists chiefly on fads and philanthropy—the kind of philanthropy that makes you abominate charity and all its works. When we lost . . . Ailsa, my little sister, Mother sort of annexed Sheila, unofficially. But that doesn't imply—that she expects me to do likewise. We're devoted to her—both of us. She's a splendid little person;' he turned now and spoke with greater naturalness and warmth. 'Not very easy to know. But *real*, right through. You're bound to love her. There—are you satisfied?' Without warning he slipped an arm round her. 'Will you give me my answer now?'

He felt her yield under pressure of his hand: then, with a sudden enchanting simplicity, she lifted her face to his—

Presently she sighed; pushed him from her a little and looked steadily into his eyes—blue, like her own, but a deeper, tenderer shade, shot through with fine radiations of orange. Hers seemed still to lack a question. His were purely exultant.

'Darling, we've done it now,' he said under his breath.

'Yes. I suppose—we have,' she answered in the same key.

'Suppose? You're not going back on things, after *that*. Next question is—when will you marry me? Next week?'

Her flush, that had died down, mounted again, clear carmine, beautiful to see. 'Oh, Mark! Give me a few minutes to realise it all. You're so impatient. Such a boy. You make me feel . . . ages old'—

'Look here, I can't have you talking that sort of rot,' he protested; incorrigibly blunt, even in love. 'It's morbid sentimentalism. You see, I'm the son of a mother who doesn't know how to feel old at fifty. "Boy," indeed! You're a mere child yourself—the dearest in creation.'

'No—no. I'm *not* a child.' Her emphatic protest rang true. 'Perhaps your mother has kept the bloom on life. Mine has never had any bloom on it, worth mentioning. I was reared in a groove; a very virtuous groove; and . . . I didn't fit. I wanted to feel and know and live; to be something more than a vegetable in a Wiltshire village. I knew I had talents of sorts; and I felt, if I could only get away and have a fair chance, I might achieve something worth doing, or, at least . . . meet a man worth marrying.' She spoke looking away from him across the sun-

splashed water. 'The only brother I cared about went off to the ends of the earth before he was twenty. If I'd been old enough to go with him, I wouldn't be here now!'

'Poor darling!' He tightened his hold of her. 'Dreadful calamity—isn't it?—to be here now! But didn't your mother understand you—help you?'

'Poor little mother. She did her best. My unconventional streak comes from her side. But she's a very tame edition; watered down by an early marriage with father, who's as conventional as a high road, but unfortunately not as broad! Privately, I think she was half proud of me and half terrified of what I might do next, like the hen in Hans Andersen. It was father's pharisaical attitude towards my mild vagaries that made me worse, till at last I kicked clean over the traces, demanded a reasonable allowance (to my amazement, I got it), and went off to London, to take the world by storm!'

'To Miss O'Neill?' Mark queried, a faint anxiety in his tone.

'Oh no. Harry's a fairly recent phase. I boarded with a friendly family in the second-rate theatrical line. That was my chosen road to achievement. But it didn't come off—worse luck!'

'Nor the man worth marrying?'

Her eyes lingered in his. 'Not to any great extent! They were rather a mixed lot. And everything seemed in league against me. I made no headway anywhere. Still—it was experience. It was life. One was too busy, either hoping or despairing, to be dull. Each new phase seemed to be the discovery of a new kingdom, till you found—you hadn't the key. There was the writing phase, the acting phase, the American phase—'

'America? Why on earth—?'

'Oh, I don't know. The chance came. And the notion attracted me. A bigger, fresher world; experience—'

'You seem mighty keen on experience,' Mark struck in. 'D'you mean knowledge—or simply new sensations?'

She hesitated. 'After all—new sensations *are* a form of knowledge. The most interesting on earth. I'd go almost anywhere to discover the feel of things—'

She stopped short, and Mark frowned into vacancy. For the first time he caught himself wondering how old was she.

'I should say better be an ignoramus than a mere connoisseur

in sensations,' he remarked quietly. 'But perhaps I missed your meaning?'

'Perhaps there wasn't any meaning to miss! I was talking—rather at random.' Then very lightly she leaned her head against his. 'Mark—dearest, don't look like that.'

'Well, you mustn't talk like that,' he said with decision. 'How long were you in America?'

'Eighteen months. Not very pleasant always. But it did me no end of good. I even went home for a time, full of fine resolves. But the poor things soon shrivelled up in father's atmosphere. Then—it was Harry to the rescue.'

'And now it's Mark!' With sudden fervour he caught her to him. 'No more "phases" after this, my Bel. You shall have your freedom and your chance. I'll make up to you, all I can, for the bad years. Mother will love you——'

Bel shook her head. 'She doesn't like me.'

'Darling, she doesn't know you. Mother may have her cranks and prejudices. But if there's one woman on earth she can be trusted to love—it's my wife. I'll take you to her to-night.'

'No—no. To-morrow. To-night—there's Harry. It'll be a blow. You see, when I first came to her, I was so sick—with everything, I swore I'd never marry. She's jealous already—'

'Poor soul!' Mark said tenderly. 'But I'm jealous too. I can't share you with Miss O'Neill. If it comes to a tug, you'll have to choose between us.'

'I have chosen.' She spoke with genuine fervour; and leaning against him, she closed her eyes. So seen, her face looked years younger and of a saint-like purity. Doubts and qualms seemed sacrilege. Without a word he kissed her lowered lids, and found, to his surprise, that her lashes were wet.

(To be continued.)

THE BATTLEFIELDS OF THE OURCQ.

BY EDMUND GOSSE, C.B.

IN the midst of the delicious Ile de France there lies an open piece of country roughly bounded by three rivers—the Marne, the Ourcq, and the Nonette. It is a high plateau, with rolling hills and winding valleys, fertile and smiling. It forms the northern extremity of the famous district of Brie, richly productive, the kitchen-garden of Paris, which lies to the west of it—surprisingly, alarmingly near. This is the battlefield of the Marne, or more exactly of the Ourcq, and was the scene, in September 1914, of what will probably be looked upon in history as one of the most portentous, and most obscurely enthralling, of the combats of the world. At the courteous invitation of the French Government, and under the charge of a distinguished staff-officer, Captain Gabriel Puaux, I paid a visit to these battlefields towards the end of last September. It was a pilgrimage wholly objective and sentimental, for I have no pretensions of any kind to a knowledge of the arts of war. I can but give a visual impression of what the scenes looked like two years after the stupendous event.

We proceeded in a War Office car almost directly east from the gates of Paris, along the great high road towards Strasburg. We reached in some seventeen miles the point, at Claye-Souilly, which marks the extreme advance of the German armies. Their outposts came within sight of the village of Claye, where they found the French awaiting them, but they did not cross the bridge over the Ourcq canal. It overwhelms the imagination to realise, on the spot, how close the Germans were to the zone of Paris on this 5th of September 1914. Civilisation, as observed by the angels in Mr. Hardy's drama, might well then seem to hang by a single thread over the abyss. At this moment, as Mr. Belloc says, 'at the maximum of its developed energy, at the highest degree of its momentum,' the horrible German machine was first checked and then put out of gear by the splendid genius of the French Higher Command. We were eager to see the places where France earned for herself this endless meed of glory.

Soon after passing Claye we left the high road, and turned north into a labyrinth of byways. The weather was superb;

it was one of those blue days of late September, which are apt to collect to themselves all the best beauty of the year in France. From dawn to sunset not a cloud rose in the sky ; there reigned a soft continual radiance in which the colour of every object took peculiar intensity. The first hamlet we reached, Charny, brought us to the only disappointment of our day ; for we failed, after much inquiry, to find the place of death, or even of burial, of the poet Charles Péguy, who has been the intellectual mascot of this war to France. His gallant death opened the battle of the Marne. Under the shelter of a slope, he and his men fought until they were driven into the open. The officer who led them, and his lieutenant, were soon killed ; Péguy then had no sooner taken the command than a ball struck him full in the forehead. His death marked the moment of transition between France in danger and France redeemed. We endeavoured to follow his track, and we drove through Villeroy, where there is little or nothing left to see. The rustic calm of these grey hamlets is unbroken, and at first all that tells us of the tragedy is the appearance from this point onwards of the flags which mark where the French soldiers lie.

The dominant feature of these rural battlefields, as we saw them in the full upland sunshine on that long splendid September day, was the scattered profusion of little tricolor flags. A long blue horizon, broken by golden haystacks against the sky, gave a general tone of greyness to the earth, which, green with oats, livid with beetroot, brown with parched lucerne, rolled beneath that vast expanse. In the midst of this harmony of tender hues there stood out sharply the hard red, white, and blue of the little flags, planted now solitary and now in clusters, without arrangement or system—the bright flags flapping and fluttering in the wind as far as the eye could reach, like charming indigenous flowers, like brilliant ixias on some pale South African veldt ; and each marking the spot where a hero fell. At first, a stick with a képi on the top of it, or even a cravat or a medal, had to serve for a provisional mark, but now the little splendid flag seems to be a permanent memorial. It leaps from a corner of the beetroot field, from a slope of the harvest, from the turn of an apple-orchard, from the edge of the road, and in its singleness and in its multitude alike, it marks this district of the Brie a holy land for ever.

But this is to anticipate a little. We passed north through Iverny, where there was a great deal of fighting, and then eastwards, skirting Montyon, where the Germans, pressed hard in their retreat,

threw nine hundred bombs into a duckpond. It was only in the neighbourhood of the graceful hill of Montyon that the flags began to be noticed. In Montyon we observed the first ruined cottage ; but it is at Barcy, the next hamlet to the north-east, that the vestiges of war begin to be numerous. Barcy was the centre of the enemy's line on September 6, and this village has not made much effort to recover from its heavy devastation. These little communes of the Ile de France possess nothing of the architectural charm which gives so exquisite and tender a beauty to many a village of Southern England, but most of them have a single feature, the church. In the case of Barcy, the broad village street forms an avenue closed, at its northern end, by the graceful parish church, with its short pointed spire. This building is violently injured by the bombardment, and looks as though some monster had bitten large pieces out of it ; while no attempt has yet been made to restore it.

Other buildings at Barcy have been patched or mended. It is probable that this work of restoration has been delayed by the uncertainty which has prevailed as to the part which the State was prepared to take in this rehabilitation. Only ten days after my visit the French Government, for the first time, assumed the full responsibility for the rebuilding of private property destroyed in the war, and now, therefore, so soon as labour is forthcoming, the work may be expected to go merrily forward. What is involved is so enormous that the imagination fails to follow the course which it must take. Up to the present time it has been left to private enterprise, and as regards these villages of the Marne and Ourcq, except where the owner has been in a hurry to resume his normal life, the bombarded villages have been left in a deplorable disarray.

On the open down above Barcy, and quite close to the road, a peasant was loading a hay-cart with the help of two sullen-looking men in rough white clothes. These were German prisoners, and we were moved by curiosity to stop and talk to the peasant. He, from his half-built rick, replied with stolidity to our questions. 'He had no complaints to make of the prisoners,' he said ; 'that one', indicating a burly captive, 'really works quite well.' 'Had they learned to speak French ?' we asked. 'Oh no !' 'How, then, did the work get on ?' 'Ah,' said the master, 'we show them what they have to do, and they point at what they want.' During this, and more, conversation the prisoners pursued their slow labour, not glancing at us or taking more notice than cattle would. Strange it seemed, and almost inhuman, that these Germans should have

lived two years in this sequestered French village and that neither on the one side nor on the other should there have been the smallest approximation of language. The peasant 'had no complaints to make,' and that was the sum of their relations.

It was beyond Barcy that the bright flags began to be abundant. The eye had no longer any need to seek for them; the garden of death was now lavish of its bouquets of flowers. They were difficult to distinguish among the beetroot, easy among the oats, insistent on the grey expanse of stubble. Soon after leaving Barcy, at the corner where the road turns abruptly south, there is a great cluster of them, and, always at a little distance off, the plain black crosses which mark the spots where Germans are buried. Presently we paused to examine the great monument raised to the memory of officers and men who fell in the battle of the Ourcq. It is garish in colour, and too much adorned with symbols in silvered cardboard and wreaths of arsenical green. No doubt it is provisional; a memorial in severer taste will ultimately testify to the riper genius of France. We descend to Chambray, another tiny village of Brie, and here we meet with a feature of poignant importance. In the great 'push,' the retiring Germans occupied the cemetery of Chambray, a walled enclosure at the summit of the village; this was a position of great strength, commanding the countryside in every direction.

The Germans used this cemetery as a citadel, and the holes which they made for their guns in the wall, and the breaches in the parapet, are still untouched. As their army retired the enemy were obliged to withdraw from this position, and there was a violent struggle, in the course of which the French regained the enclosure, and used it in their turn. They fired with full effect from behind the granite tombstones. After the battle the whole cemetery was a scene of ruin and confusion, but of this nothing remains now, except the gun-holes and breaches in the wall, which have not been repaired. All the monuments of the dead, on the other hand, have been replaced with extreme piety, and, the cemetery not having been nearly full before, its free spaces have been used to hold the tombs of officers and men who fell in the battle. I noted, among many of pathetic interest, the stone erected in memory of Lieut. Quilquini, who brought his Tunisian troops, the 8th Tirailleurs, from Sfax. There seemed something which moved the fancy sorrowfully in the idea of these loyal Africans who fell to ward off the barbarians' blow at Paris. Outside the cemetery local patriotism has fitted up, in a

barn, a sort of rough museum of objects found on the battlefields. No doubt this will be a great attraction when once the tourist reassembles in his myriads. At present the solitude is broken only by occasional privileged mourners, 'brisés d'émotion et de tristesse.'

Proceeding south, we were soon out of the battlefield of the Ourcq, the frontier being marked at Penchard by another rather garish monument to the fallen officers. This is the place where three thousand Morocco troops dashed with memorable fury of attack up the Penchard hill. At this point the road turns, revealing, far below, to the left, the clustered houses of Meaux, with its cathedral, seated in a rich glade across a curve of the silver Marne. The first stage of our pilgrimage was over, and we paused an hour in the exquisite city of which Bossuet was the Eagle-bishop. Meaux is celebrated for the miracle which snatched it from the very jaws of the dog, and prevented it from becoming another Arras, another Reims. The catastrophe seemed inevitable, when at six o'clock on September 5 a patrol of Uhlans appeared in the city. All day long they were close to Meaux, the population of which had given themselves up for lost three days before. The bombardment of the cathedral actually began, but, as by the direct interposition of God, no shell touched the building, and then, under the pressure of the English army, the Germans retired altogether. The situation of Meaux, with its row of great seventeenth-century mills on a stone bridge spanning the river—mills which still produce immense quantities of flour for Paris—is as picturesque as that of any provincial city in France, and on the occasion of our recent visit, with its brimming river, its ancient russet mills, its noble church, all bathed in the liquid gold of September, it seemed lovelier than ever before. The only sign of disturbance is the modern bridge, which the English blew up for strategical purposes, without hurting the old town in any respect.

In leaving Meaux to return to the battlefields we took a northward road almost parallel with that by which we had entered, but somewhat to the east of it, thus crossing the battlefields at a point a couple of miles farther on in the German retreat. There is little to see close to Meaux, but presently the graves begin, many of them gay with dahlias and chrysanthemums. We descended to the village of Varreddes, which takes a prominent place in the chronicle of the fighting. The struggle here was very heavy. Varreddes is a rather large village, built a little distance to the south of the canal of the Ourcq, which makes at this place a great bend, surrounding the

village on three sides, while the Marne nearly isolates it on the fourth. Hence it was held by the enemy with determination as long as possible. At Varreddes the Germans did dreadful things. They ordered the population of the village to leave it at once, and a group of seventeen very old men, who were too infirm to move quickly, they set up against a wall and shot in cold blood. The priest, a venerable man of seventy-six years, they seized as a hostage, and killed in their retreat.

Many bright new roofs and walls testify in the village of Varreddes to the enterprise of the inhabitants, who have ventured to rebuild their ruined houses. The church, which has some good thirteenth-century features, seems to be intact. And yet it is precisely at Varreddes that the scheme of the battle, as it swept from west to east, is most intelligible to a civilian. The intensity of the fighting is proved by the profusion of graves, whose flags glitter and shimmer, with their petals of red, white, and blue, in every direction. Farther on, above Etrépilly, a large turfed reservoir, perched on a hillock, forms a landmark, from which the eye explores in every direction the rolling country, intersected by scarcely visible glens or trenches, through which the rivers wind. On the summit of this commanding height we found a curious monument, which called for an explanation which no one seemed competent to give. It consists of a metal shield of brilliant vermilion and azure, surmounted by seven flags—one of them the American flag—and addressed in large letters, 'Les Prisonniers de Guerre aux Héros de la Marne.' What prisoners these were we asked one another in vain. But it made our hearts, with a touch of added mystery, thrill in fresh response to those myriads of memorial flowers that twinkled and sparkled on the circle of brown fields around us. There is one object of horror that attracts attention here. It was a great barn or hangar, in which the bodies of the fallen Germans were heaped up after the battle, and then burned by their comrades. It is now nothing but a huge skeleton of twisted iron, grimacing at the sky.

Between Varreddes and Etrépilly, as we prepare to cross the Ourcq, we pass a little tavern at the left-hand side of the road, which carries on a newly painted sign the name 'À l'Obus.' The excuse for this is that on its gable-end, close to a window, it displays an unexploded German shell, rusty and red, which half penetrated the wall and stuck there, without bursting. Similar bombs are already pointed out as curiosities in tree-trunks, and will

doubtless be much exploited when tourists begin to be admitted. On the east from Varreddes we had seen, through a screen of trees, the Marne below us, and the great bridge at Germigny-l'Évêque, which the Germans blew up behind them in their final retreat. We are now in the very midst of the worst slaughter of September 6 and 7, 1914, but it is very curious to see how little sign of it is left in the countryside. Occasional remnants of barbed wire, and here and there the trenches of defence, might easily be overlooked by a hasty traveller. He will more readily notice that here are orchards, starred with the rose-colour of ripening apples; there feathery boskage of acacias delicately green; here we run between violently contrasted fields, with the sulphur of mustard on one side, the purple of beetroot on the other; there the oat-harvest descends to little copses of chestnut and beech, that brood over some unseen rivulet. Everywhere the peace of uniform rustic experience, unaltered through the sober centuries, would seem stamped upon the landscape, if the little occasional groups of flapping tricolors were not there to remind us that only two brief years ago the question whether European liberty should or should not be overwhelmed for ever was fought out here with unsurpassable fury and tenacity.

The winding walled hamlet of Etrépilly is bright with the sunshine on its new orange and velvet-brown roofs, by which the damage done by the German shells is concealed. This is not the case with the little village of Vincy-Manœuvres, through which we pass next on our northward course. Vincy was heavily shelled on September 7, and still presents an appearance of dismal dilapidation. Without doubt, this is a matter which depends on the enterprise or wealth of individual proprietors, and it will be curious to see what immediate effect the decision of the Government to repair all private property at the cost of the State will have in these remote communes. It was on September 9, 1914, that the German army made a final stand on the wooded height between Vincy-Manœuvres and Acy-en-Multien, from which they were dislodged next day by the army of Manoury. This was the third and conclusive stage of the great struggle, in the course of which the sixth French army pushed back the half-encircling corps of Kluck's reinforcements, and here we felt it necessary to bear in mind, as much as the peaceful uniformity of the landscape would permit, the great double line of attack and retreat which we had now twice traversed.

We sped on north, and were now no longer in the department of the Seine-et-Marne, but in that of the Oise. No place was more prominent in the battle than Acy-en-Multien, which we now approached. This must have been, and indeed still is, much the most attractive and picturesque of the villages which the battle of the Ourcq has immortalised. Acy lies in a wooded dimple of the high plateau, and it is scattered broadly over its site, more like an English than a French township. When it is considered with what violence the Germans were hunted out of Acy, it is surprising how few marks of their presence are left. One large house, of *château* pretensions, is a complete wreck, having been bombed out of existence by German shells, but the beautiful and curious church, with its twelfth-century octagonal tower and its rudiments of earliest Gothic ornament, is, so far as the eye can judge, intact. At Acy a prodigious number of French soldiers are buried in a vast cemetery, which seems to have been improvised for the occasion. The piety of relatives and friends keeps these graves so lavishly covered with nosegays that the cemetery looks like a flower-garden. The epitaphs and sentiments on the tombstones are poignant, and we lingered long and with great emotion in this sacred melancholy place. I was particularly struck by one inscription—that on the tombstone of a certain Charles Schulz, who died as a corporal, leading on his men. He had been, till the war broke out, a Protestant pastor, but in what locality the epitaph does not say. The text chosen for his place of burial—*'il tint ferme, parcequ'il voyait celui qui est invisible'*—may well have been the echo of his own sentiments when he exchanged his ministry for the terrible duty of fighting for his fatherland. By his name, he was doubtless an Alsatian, and curiosity was eager to know more of this Protestant pastor-corporal who sleeps in the pretty cemetery of Acy-en-Multien.

In leaving Acy, our motor lost its way up a lane that led only to a farmyard. By this happy chance, in our descent or retreat, we enjoyed an exquisite view of the village, nestled in its grove of chestnuts around the spire of its rather fantastic church—a view which in other conditions we should have missed, since these villages, sunken in folds of the upland, have a strange faculty for making themselves invisible at a little distance. Recovering our route, we continued northward, over the high rounded plateau of the Multien, which is the local name for this part of the department of the Oise. The character of the landscape now changes, and becomes very

English. Proceeding from Acy to Nanteuil-le-Hardouin is like traversing the high parts of Gloucestershire; the lie of the land exactly resembles that of the Cotswolds, and I could easily have persuaded myself that we were driving from Stow-in-the-Wold to Burford. It is obvious that this rolling country, here entirely deprived of streams and glens, offers an extraordinary opportunity for the evolutions of troops, but remarkably little shelter for them.

Nanteuil, a gloomy village, almost a town, with winding narrow streets, severely grey, and a great church which towers over the wayfarer, marks the limit of the battle north-eastwards. Although there was a good deal of fighting around Nanteuil, it shows, so far as we could perceive, no trace of injury, even on the picturesque façade of the church. We left it to enter a long avenue of oaks, and there was no mark of any kind to indicate where the battle ended. My companion humorously remarked that it was the duty of the Government to put up a *poteau* with the inscription, 'Ici finit le champ de bataille de l'Oureq'! But in the absence of such a guide-post to aid the imagination of the traveller there was nothing in the rolling agricultural landscape, from which the little flowery flags had now disappeared, to indicate that here there had been any disturbance of the peace of the world.

At this point, therefore, a picture of the battlefields of the Ourcq as they now exist should end. But an impression was awaiting us at the threshold of the very next village, Baron, which was perhaps the most poignant and certainly the most extraordinary of our whole day. As we motored along we noticed, just before reaching Baron, a high wall on the left hand containing a marble plaque, with an inscription in gold letters. Curiosity prompted us to stop and read this inscription, which stated that in the house behind this wall the musical composer, Albéric Magnard, was shot and burned on Wednesday, September 3, 1914. A funereal poem by M. Edmond Rostand described how

Celui-là, qui, rebelle à toute trahison,

had lived there, died to preserve the honour of his art. We were therefore close to the scene of a horrible crime, which the magnitude of the events that closely followed it has somewhat obscured in memory. Albéric Magnard, the author of 'Guercœur' and other operas, born on June 9, 1865, was one of the most eminent and successful musicians of France. He had for many years possessed a country-seat at Baron, where he had built a little château, Le Manoir

des Fontaines, in which he had brought together a collection of musical instruments and books which was famous.

We were reading the inscription on the wall, when a door in the latter opened and a sad woman appeared, asking us if we would like to see the place where Monsieur Magnard died. She led us through a pergola of climbing plants to a point where we suddenly saw before us what resembled a scene in some opera—a garden blazing with begonias and African marigolds, surrounded on three sides by a graceful balustrade, and velvety with green sward. Below the balustrade a little park, beautifully kept, testified to the elegant taste of the proprietor. But in the midst of this brilliance and neatness the livid shell of the house itself stood untouched since the disaster, producing in the midst of the bright parterres and trim lawns an extraordinary effect of sinister and ironic horror. It was like seeing a skeleton in a ball-dress, or a wreath of roses round a skull.

The good woman, who herself had lost in the fighting her two sons, described to us the murder. A troop of Germans was marching down the road and, attracted by something in the *Manoir des Fontaines*, they had insisted on being admitted by the door at which we entered. M. Magnard was in his bath-room, at the back of the house. He is believed to have appeared at the window, and a German soldier immediately shot him dead. They then set fire to the house, and they watched it till the half-calcined body of the composer fell through the rafters on to the floor of the room below. Meanwhile, they took his son and tied him, facing the scene of his father's murder, to the trunk of a tree in the garden, and prepared to shoot him. But three peasants out of the village of Baron swore that he was not the son of M. Magnard, but of the gardener; and so, when their work was done, the Germans went off, leaving the boy alive, to be released by the villagers. The exact conditions under which the famous composer was killed are mysterious, and are likely to remain so, since no French eye witnessed the actual commission of the crime. It is possible that he offered, or appeared likely to offer, some resistance to the aggressors.

M. Rostand's verses suggest that, in the version of the event which reached him, Magnard was attempting 'to preserve the honour of his art.' Whether he obeyed an instinct of self-preservation, or whether he fell a passive victim, matters very little. The incident in any case illustrates that Teutonic spirit of anarchism which Viscount Grey has stigmatised as a menace to the future of civilisation.

TWO MONUMENTS IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

BY SIR CHARLES P. LUCAS, K.C.B., K.C.M.G.

IN Westminster Abbey, towards the western end of the nave, on the northern side, stands a monument of rather special interest at the present day, upon which there is this inscription :

'The Province of Massachusetts Bay in New England, by an order of the great and general Court bearing date Feb. 1st, 1759, caused this monument to be erected, to the memory of George Augustus Lord Viscount Howe, Brigadier General of His Majesty's forces in America, who was slain July the 6th, 1758, on the march to Ticonderoga, in the 34th year of his age : in testimony of the sense they had of his services and military virtues, and of the affection their officers and soldiers bore to his command. He lived respected and beloved, the public regretted his loss, to his family it is irreparable.'

Dean Stanley, in his 'Historical Memorials of Westminster Abbey' (1869 ed.), makes the following reference to this monument, which apparently stood, at the date when he wrote, in the south aisle of the nave : 'Massachusetts and Ticonderoga, not yet divided from us, appear on the monument in the South aisle of the Nave erected to Viscount Howe, the unsuccessful elder brother of the famous Admiral.' It is difficult to understand why the Dean used the curiously infelicitous term 'unsuccessful' in this case. The word might have been applied with some accuracy to the younger soldier brother, Sir William Howe, most successful in his early military career, but not so in the War of American Independence, though even in that war he was a constant winner of battles ; but unless to die young is, on the principle of the survival of the fittest, to be considered a mark of failure, no word could be more inappropriate to a man whose life, according to the notice of him in the Annual Register for 1758, presumably written by Edmund Burke, 'was long enough for his honour, but not for his country.'

He was the eldest of three brothers. The second was the famous Admiral, 'Black Dick,' the hero of 'The Glorious First of June,' which we recalled on the occasion of the late great sea-fight in the North Sea. The third was the general already mentioned. They were a notable trio, but the eldest, the shortest lived, the

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'unsuccessful' one of the three, had in him the promise of greatness of the rarest kind. It would be difficult to pick out any man whose death called forth such a consensus of eulogy. Possibly he was *felix opportunitate mortis*. Possibly the same might be said of his friend Wolfe, who was killed in his thirty-third year, as Howe in his thirty-fourth. But assuredly, had these two men lived on, there would have been a different story to tell of England and America.

Dean Stanley writes of Wolfe's friendship for Lord Howe the Admiral, quoting Horace Walpole's words, that they were 'friends to each other as cannon to gunpowder'; but Wolfe's friendship for the 'unsuccessful' brother must have been as great; his admiration for him at any rate was unbounded. Wolfe was no great respecter of persons; he was somewhat impatient and critical of other commanders, but—'If my Lord Howe had lived, I should have been very happy to have received his orders.' In Wolfe's eyes Howe was 'the very best officer in the King's service,' 'the noblest Englishman that has appeared in my time.' And so said they all: there was no dissentient voice, no whisper of criticism, no trace of jealousy. General Abercromby, to whom Howe was second in command, in reporting his death, wrote, 'He was, very deservedly, universally beloved and respected throughout the whole army.' Pitt's testimony ran that 'he was by the universal voice of army and people a character of ancient times, a complete model of military virtue in all its branches.' Robert Rogers, the bold leader of the Rangers, in whose company Howe learnt the art of North American bush fighting, wrote of him as a 'noble and brave officer,' 'universally beloved by both officers and soldiers of the army'; while the members of the Massachusetts House of Assembly, no great lovers of the redcoats from home, and close-fisted enough in ordinary dealings, voted £250 for a monument to the Englishman, whose character had impressed them all, and whose person their soldiers dearly loved.

Howe had been made colonel of the lately raised Royal Americans, the ancestors of the 60th Rifles, the famous King's Royal Rifle Corps. Shortly afterwards he was transferred to the command of the 55th Regiment. Pitt then appointed him to be brigadier to General Abercromby, who, in 1758, was placed in chief command of the Central Advance on Canada, along the line of Lake George and Lake Champlain. Abercromby neither was, nor had the reputation of being, a first-rate general, and Lord Chesterfield was no doubt roughly accurate when he wrote, 'Abercromby is to be the sedentary

and not the acting commander.' The inspiration and the motive force were to come from Howe. Early in July 1758 the army, consisting of over 6000 regulars and some 9000 provincials, was carried on *bateaux* and whaleboats to the northern end of Lake George, where, near the outlet of that lake into Lake Champlain, stood the immediate objective, the French fort of Ticonderoga. The force was landed, an advance was made through dense forest and scrub, Lord Howe with a party of Rangers was leading the principal column, they stumbled across a French reconnoitring party, there was a skirmish, and Howe was killed. 'The French lost above three hundred men, and we, though successful, lost as much as it was possible to lose in one.' That is one of the many comments made upon the incident, all on the same note. Here is another: 'In Lord Howe the soul of General Abercromby's army seemed to expire.' Two days later Abercromby ordered a headlong, blundering assault upon the works of the fort, which ended in terrible losses and complete repulse.

In his dispatch of August 26, 1915, reporting upon the operations at the Dardanelles up to that date, Sir Ian Hamilton wrote:

'Lieutenant-General Sir W. R. Birdwood has been the soul of Anzac. Not for one single day has he ever quitted his post. Cheery and full of human sympathy, he has spent many hours of each twenty-four inspiring the defenders of the front trenches, and if he does not know every soldier in his force, at least every soldier in the force believes he is known to his chief.'

Here we have something like a modern counterpart, happily still with us, of Lord Howe.

It is at once the glory of the British Empire, and its chief source of strength, that it contains within it so many diverse elements, all co-operating for the common weal, all owing free and willing allegiance to one sovereign. Many races combine to make the great community which we call by the strangely inaccurate term of Empire; and the British race itself, in the process of transplantation, has developed different types in differing lands, climates, and surroundings. The home Briton, born and bred within the four seas of the United Kingdom, necessarily differs somewhat in character and physique from the Briton of the Canadian prairies or the Australian backblocks. The Canadian Briton again differs from the Australasian or South African, while among Australasians the Australian is of one type, the New Zealander of another. All supple-

ment each other ; all contribute to the common stock some ingredient which the others have not, and the sum total is greater and richer than if the units of which it is composed were all alike and uniform. On the other hand, diversities demand wise handling, or they may become a source not of strength, but of weakness. It is as easy to drift farther apart as to come closer, to exaggerate differences as to minimise them. Every citizen of the Empire is a missionary of the Empire, for by the individual citizens the types are judged. The home Briton who visits Australia leaves behind him a good or bad taste for England among the Australians with whom he has been brought into contact. The Australian who comes to the Old Country gives to Australia among the people of the Old Country a better or a worse name. But of necessity the leaders are most potent in mission work, and among the leaders those who lead armed men on active service ; who are in touch with them day by day in the camp, on the march, in the trenches or on the open battlefield ; on whom it devolves to enforce discipline, and with whom it rests whether or not discipline means friction. It is impossible to measure the amount of lasting good which is wrought when overseas soldiers associate tact and sympathy with home leadership or, on the other hand, the mischief which results from want of personal assimilation. It is not by any means military capacity alone that makes the soul of an Empire army. We are all beginning to know each other, to value each other, to make allowances for each other, to an extent which was impossible before steamers multiplied the coming and going of men, and turned uncertain and spasmodic into regular and assured communication. Doubts can be at once set at rest and misapprehensions promptly removed by the use of the submarine cable. Moreover, this familiarising process, and the annihilation of distance, is a progressive matter. Every year leaves us rather closer to one another than we were the year before. If, even under these favourable modern conditions, the personal element still plays a most important part, it was all-important in the middle years of the eighteenth century.

In the Seven Years' War, when, in the words of Frederick the Great, England, having been long in labour, had at length brought forth a man, that man, William Pitt, set himself to fight France in America, and sent out what were for the time comparatively large armies to conquer Canada. He called upon the British North American colonies to co-operate and raise their levies ; and inasmuch as his appeal was made in wise and tactful terms, and the

colonies realised that for once England would not leave them in the lurch, they, or some of them, answered to the call with patriotism and goodwill. Thus regular soldiers from England, in greater numbers than ever before, came among the colonists, and provincial regiments were raised to march and fight side by side with the troops of the line. Then was seen and felt in its fullest extent the difference between the home Briton and his brother beyond the seas, at a time when the divergence was most pronounced. The regulars were very regular, the Provincials were very provincial; from a military point of view the two bodies of men were at opposite poles. The Provincials knew nothing of training or discipline; they were nondescript, temporary soldiers of small democracies; they were farmers enlisted for the campaign, their term of service in any case not exceeding one year: few had uniforms, some brought guns with them, some had none to bring: the officers were in effect chosen by the men. The troops of the line, on the other hand, imported into the backwoods of North America the stiffness and rigidity of European dress, discipline, and tactics in the eighteenth century, and between the officers and soldiers there was a great gulf fixed, as between the ranks of society in Europe.

It was but natural that these officers should regard the provincial soldiery with disdain, and that a corresponding resentment should be felt in the provincial ranks. Some of the greatest soldiers of the day were not exempt from this partisan feeling. After the disaster to Braddock's force in 1755, Washington, who had been present on the field and who contrasted the conduct of the Virginians in the fight with that of the regulars, wrote in the bitterest terms of the latter. Wolfe, on the other hand, had, in 1758, no words strong enough to express his disgust at the shortcomings of the American soldiers. 'The Americans are in general the dirtiest, most contemptible cowardly dogs that you can conceive.' If these were the views of the foremost men of the day in the colonial levies and in the regular army respectively, it must be presumed that the lesser men felt at least as strongly. Mrs. Grant, the authoress of '*Memoirs of an American Lady*,' a book which was published at New York, in 1809, speaks of the 'secret contempt' with which 'many officers justly esteemed, possessed of capacity, learning, and much knowledge, both of the usages of the world and the art of war . . . regarded the blunt simplicity and plain appearance of the settlers'; and among the officers who came out from England there must have been a large proportion whose contempt was not unspoken or unnoticed.

It was not merely a case of friction between the professional soldier and the amateur, the one looking down upon the other, and the other resenting the airs of the superior person. The mischief was deeper seated. The northern colonies of British America were cradled in centrifugal traditions: a large proportion of the first colonists had come out to be rid of the Home Government, its discipline and its control. Puritanism was the dominant religious and political creed; and the surroundings, except at a few town centres, were of a stern and simple kind. Among men and women born and reared on these lines, and into their family circles, came regimental officers from England, many, if not most, of whom had been bred in the ways of fashionable English Society, which, in the middle of the eighteenth century, was not, to say the least of it, characterised by high tone or scrupulous refinement. The settlers in the New World, by the mere fact of their removal out of the Old World into the wilderness, had preserved for themselves and their descendants the old-time feeling and modes of thought in the Old World, and to them the new leaven from an up-to-date Old World was a leaven of unrighteousness. Mrs. Grant was the daughter of an officer in the 55th Regiment, Howe's own regiment, but she had spent her childhood in the American atmosphere, and had been mainly brought up in a Dutch family. Consequently she tells us that she was 'a little ashamed of having a military father,' and writes of 'the scarlet coat, which I had been taught to consider as the symbol of wickedness.' It was to some extent as though Cavaliers and Roundheads had come to life again, and were jostling one another, while fighting under the same flag and for the same cause, as a prelude to once more springing at each other's throats.

At this time and place a man of the type of Lord Howe was an almost priceless asset to the cause of Imperial Unity—a cause which can never stand still, but either declines or goes forward, and goes forward only through intelligent appreciation of existing conditions and active sympathy with living men. Of high social standing in England, and acknowledged military reputation, he set himself, by precept and still more by personal example, to the work of assimilation.

'This gallant man,' says the Annual Register for 1758, 'from the moment he landed in America, had wisely conformed and made his regiment conform to the kind of service which the country required. He did not suffer any under him to encumber themselves with superfluous baggage; he himself set the example and

fares like a common soldier. The first to encounter danger, to endure hunger, to support fatigue; rigid in his discipline but easy in his manners, his officers and soldiers readily obeyed the commander, because they loved the man.'

Wolfe wrote of him as a man 'whom nature has formed for the war of this country,' and Mrs. Grant, that he was 'above the pedantry of holding up standards of military rules, where it was impossible to enforce them, and the narrow spirit of preferring the modes of his own country to those proved by experience to suit that in which he was to act.' She christens him 'This young Lycurgus of the camp.'

Under Howe everything was literally cut down to meet the exigencies of American warfare. Gold and scarlet was laid aside: baggage was reduced to a minimum: the muskets were shortened: their barrels were darkened: the skirts of the long regimental coats were cut off: Indian leggings were brought into use. Wolfe writes in May 1758, 'Our clothes, our arms, our accoutrements, nay even our shoes and stockings are all improper for this country. Lord Howe is so well convinced of it that he has taken away all the men's breeches.' A French writer tells us that the officers and men were only allowed one shirt apiece. 'Lord H. set the example, by himself washing his own dirty shirt, and drying it in the sun, while he in the meantime wore nothing but his coat.' And here is the unkindest cut of all—in Mrs. Grant's words:

'The greatest privation to the young and vain yet remained. Hair well dressed, and in great quantity, was then considered as the greatest possible ornament, which those who had it took the utmost care to display to advantage, and to wear in a bag or queue, whichever they fancied. Lord Howe's was fine and very abundant; he, however, cropped it and ordered every one else to do the same.'

In all things the commander set the example: he never asked his officers or men to do anything or to give up anything which he did not do or give up himself. Thus his regiment of regulars was set in order for backwood fighting and, what was more, it was attuned to the ways of the land and of the people of the land. 'They were ever after considered as an example to the whole American Army.'

Mrs. Grant tells a story, which Francis Parkman has repeated in his delightful 'Montcalm and Wolfe,' of Lord Howe giving a dinner to his officers in his tent. The furniture consisted of logs of wood and bearskins, 'and presently the servants set down a

large dish of pork and pease.' Howe pulled a sheath with a knife and fork in it out of his pocket, and proceeded to carve the meat. The officers 'sat in a kind of awkward suspense' for want of knives and forks, until Howe, after expressing surprise that they did not possess 'portable implements' of the kind, 'finally relieved them from their embarrassment, by distributing to each a case the same as his own, which he had provided for that purpose.' The real point of the story is that, if Howe had been an ordinary man, his dinner would probably have been resented by the officers as an impertinent practical joke. But he was not an ordinary man; among his officers and soldiers he was like King David: 'Whatsoever the king did pleased all the people.'

Albany in New York State was always the base for expeditions against Canada, by the central route, which lay along the line of water communication. In war time through Albany regiments came and went, and in and around it they congregated and encamped. Albany was pre-eminently a centre for the old New York families of Dutch descent. On the upper waters of the Hudson and the lower reaches of the Mohawk River, which joins the Hudson a little above Albany, were the estates of the 'patroons' of the Dutch régime, and here their descendants lived and thrived. Mrs. Grant, in her *Memoirs*, tells of the lives and surroundings of one of the foremost of these families, the Schuylers, whose homes were in Albany and to the north of it in the district known as 'The Flats.' In her book an old Mrs. Schuyler ('Aunt Schuyler') is the central figure, as she was in the year 1758 the central figure of the Schuyler clan. The book tells of Lord Howe's intimacy with the family, though he never took up his quarters with them, for he 'always lay in his tent with the regiment which he commanded'; how the old lady loved him almost as a son, how sadly and affectionately she sped him on his last advance, and her grief when the news came that he was killed. 'Aunt Schuyler . . . had the utmost esteem for him, and the greatest hope that he would at some future period redress all those evils that had formerly impeded the service; and perhaps plant the British standard on the walls of Quebec.' We have drawn for us the contrast between the good and bad type of officer, the gentleman and the bully, though both may be efficient fighting men. Returning to his friends on one occasion, Howe found to his great indignation that in his absence Captain Charles Lee had come through and, 'as if he were in a conquered country,' commandeered the loyal old lady's stock and property, without

having the necessary warrants for his high-handed proceedings. Lee's next visit was after the fight at Ticonderoga, when he was brought back a wounded man to be nursed by those whom he had browbeaten and robbed. He was a king's officer; but it is difficult to deduce from his case the moral that conduct such as his brought on the Revolution, seeing that he became a general in the Revolutionary army, of great though somewhat dubious reputation.

In 1757 and 1758 Lord Howe was winning the love and esteem of all who came into contact with him in America. In 1759 the Assembly of Massachusetts voted the monument to his memory. In 1765 the men of Boston were rioting against the Stamp Act, and in 1773 throwing cargoes of tea into Boston harbour. In 1775 came open war with the Mother Country and the fight of Bunker Hill. At Bunker Hill hardest of hard fighters among the Americans was Israel Putnam: he had been by Howe's side when the latter was killed. The night before his death Howe had been in company with John Stark, noted among the New Hampshire Rangers who followed Robert Rogers. It was Stark who, in 1777, planned and won the fight at Bennington, which was the beginning of the end of Burgoyne's army. A young member of the Schuyler group, who had taken Howe to their hearts, was Philip Schuyler, afterwards one of the best known and most trusted of the Revolutionary leaders. Probably England and America had drifted too far apart at the time of the Seven Years' War for any human influence to bring them wholly into line again. Yet, had Howes been multiplied and English statesmen and commanders been modelled on his lines, the parting might well have been postponed and been less bitter when it came. He stands out in history as one who in his day did all that man could do to bring the Colonies and the Mother Country closer together; and he is a type of the Englishmen who are still wanted to-day, and who happily are not wanting, as shown by the love and confidence borne towards Sir William Birdwood by the splendid fighting men from the Southern Seas, whom he led to less and yet to more than victory.

Just over a year from the date of Lord Howe's death and Abercromby's repulse at Ticonderoga, a much abler general than Abercromby, Jeffrey Amherst, marched once more against the fort. The French abandoned their entrenchments in front of it, of which Amherst promptly took possession; and a rearguard, left to hold the fort itself, after two or three days' artillery fire,

blew it up and left the ruins to be occupied by Amherst's army. As the death of Lord Howe had immediately preceded Abercromby's attack, so a day before the second enterprise ended successfully, another officer, well known in the army and in English Society, though not comparable with Lord Howe, was killed. An entry in Knox's Historical Journal runs : ' The Honourable Colonel Townshend was picked off to-day in the trenches by a cannon shot ; he is very deservedly lamented by the General and the army ' ; a later entry mentions that his body was taken to Albany for burial. On the south side of the nave of Westminster Abbey, much farther up towards the Chancel than the place where the monument to Lord Howe stands, will be found a monument—

' erected by a disconsolate parent, The Lady Viscountess Townshend, to the memory of her fifth son, The Honble. Lt.-Colonel Roger Townshend, who was killed by a cannon ball on the 25th of July 1759 in the 28th year of his age, as he was reconnoitring the French lines at Ticonderagoe in North America . . . tho' premature his death, his life was glorious, enrolling him with the names of those immortal statesmen and commanders whose wisdom and intrepidity in the cause of this comprehensive and successful war have extended the commerce, enlarged the Dominion, and upheld the Majesty of these Kingdoms beyond the idea of any former age.'

The monument is an elaborate one, and the eulogy is obviously exaggerated. Horace Walpole would evidently have had it otherwise. In his 'Short Notes of My Life' he tells us, 'I gave my Lady Townshend an epitaph and design for a tomb for her youngest son, killed at Ticonderoga ; neither was used,' He also gives us to understand that the mother was not so disconsolate as the monument asserts :

' My Lady Townshend, who has not learning enough to copy a Spartan mother, has lost her youngest son. I saw her this morning—her affectation is on t'other side ; she affects grief—but not so much for the son she has lost, as for t'other that she may lose.'

And again, ' Poor Roger, for whom she is not concerned, has given her a hint that her hero George may be mortal too.' Whatever may have been the mother's preferences, the two brothers loved each other dearly. A few weeks before he was killed, Roger Townshend wrote to George Townshend's wife to tell her of her husband's safe arrival at Halifax from England in the best of

health, and how he had sent him supplies of fresh vegetables to make up for the long sea-voyage. The letter continues :

‘My opinion of General Amherst as an honest good man, and my attachment to him as a soldier I thought would never allow me to wish that I might serve under any other person in America, but the tie of brother and friend united is too powerful, and I confess nothing ever gave me more real concern than not being employed on the same expedition.’

In turn we have George Townshend writing sadly before the fall of Quebec of the news of his brother’s death ; and after Quebec had fallen, on the eve of his return to England, he writes to Amherst :

‘I hear I have got Barrington’s regiment. Alas, what a Bouquet this had been a year or two hence for poor Roger. I assure you I return thoroughly wounded from America. I loved him sincerely.’

George Townshend, the eldest son, whom Walpole clearly did not love, was Wolfe’s well-known brigadier, to whom Quebec capitulated, and around whom so much controversy gathered. He ended as a Marquess and a Field-Marshal, and there is no reason to doubt that he was a competent soldier. So also evidently was the younger brother. Amherst appointed him to be one of the two Deputy Adjutant-Generals of his army, his own brother, Colonel Amherst, being the other. We read of him in connection with the training of the Provincial regiments, and as commanding a detachment of Rangers sent to reconnoitre along Lake George. Amherst wrote to Wolfe that he had intended to send him home with dispatches after the fall of Ticonderoga, that his loss ‘marred the enjoyment I should otherwise have had in the reduction of the place.’ We may set him down as one of the might-have-beens, and Dean Stanley would presumably have classed him as the unsuccessful brother. If he had marked military ability, it has assuredly remained in the family ; for those who read the epitaph upon his monument in Westminster Abbey, with its reference to a comprehensive war and upholding the majesty of these kingdoms, will carry their thoughts across the seas from North America to Mesopotamia, from Ticonderoga to Kut.¹

¹ All who are interested in the personalities of the Seven Years’ War, as far as North America was concerned, owe a deep debt of gratitude to Dr. Doughty, the Government Archivist of the Dominion of Canada, for the immense amount of material which he has collected and made accessible in ‘The Siege of Quebec’ (Doughty and Parmelee), and in his edition, for the Champlain Society, of Knox’s *Historical Journal*.

THE OLD CONTEMPTIBLES: THE FIRST CHRISTMAS.

BY BOYD CABLE.

THE Divisional Ammunition and Supply Column had done a long march on the Christmas Eve. It was not so much that the distance was long in measured kilometres, but from a point of time, of dragging weariness, of bad roads, of cold and wet and discomfort it was prolonged to a heart-breaking length.

The column had taken the road at daybreak, and this meant that the men had to be on parade a full quarter-hour before, had to turn out of their uncomfortable billets and sleeping-places an hour and a half before the time to parade. In that time they had to pack their kits (a quick enough and simple job, to be sure), put on their wet boots, water and feed their horses, eat a biscuit-and-cheese breakfast, scramble for a 'lick and a promise' sort of wash, harness up their teams, pack picketing gear and odd stores on the wagons and sheet them over, have themselves and everything belonging to them packed and harnessed and standing ready to turn out promptly to the shout of 'Hook in.' They were all ready, and with a nicely-timed handful of seconds to spare, when the word came, because the practice that makes perfect had been their regular routine for a good many months past, and there had been plenty of times when they had been obliged to do the same routine in very much less than this present leisured hour and a half.

It was raining when the wagons turned out, formed up on the road, and, dropping into place unit by unit, rolled steadily off on the march. The rain was taken quite philosophically and as a matter of course, as indeed it had come to be by now and any time for a month past. There were a good many even by then who had wondered where all the rain could come from, and held a firm opinion that it must cease very soon, on the reasonable assumption that no rain supply is inexhaustible and that the past month must have 'pretty well emptied the watering-pot.' They were to learn for another solid three months almost without a break what the Flanders watering-pot can supply when it really sets about the job in earnest, and it was to come to be a standing joke and boast of the first Expeditionaries that you could always tell one of the men

who went through that first winter in France because an examination of his toes would show him to be web-footed.

But at the end of December the wet had not been accepted as such a permanent feature of life as it was to become, and there were plenty of men in the column who, as they marched out that Christmas Eve, looked up at the sky and round the grey horizon and tried to find, or persuade themselves and each other they could see, a spot where it was 'lifting.' But it did not lift, and before long the men's damp clothes, half dried by body heat in sleeping in them, had become soaked and saturated through again. It was cold too, and fingers gripped about the wet reins of their pairs of horses grew numbed and stiff, were periodically revived with much blowing of warm breath—the only item of warmth left about a man—into cupped hands, and arm beating and flapping. The roads were heavy, rutted and inches deep in stiff mud, flooded in parts by the overflow from brimming-over ditches.

The march was bad enough in its early stages ; it became acute in its discomfort as the day wore on, and men and horses grew tired and more tired. By far the worst feature was the constant series of halts. The road taken by the column was filled for miles with a slow-crawling and packed procession of horses and wagons. The slightest check at the head of the procession meant a stop to all the rest, and because each wagon took a fraction of time longer than the one ahead to see its predecessor started and to get under way itself, what to a wagon in the front ranks was no more than a slowing to avoid running into the wagon ahead was easily translated a few teams back into a pull-up and immediate move on, and further back the line to a longer and longer interval of halt. So that in the middle and rear of the line there were frequent halts of a minute, two, three, and up to ten minutes. And if a wagon driving through an extra soft portion of road was caught and held beyond the immediate strength of the tired team to pull out, the halt might spin out into anything up to fifteen minutes. Several times during the day there were hour-long halts at cross- or fork-roads, while cross streams of traffic passed clear or entering streams were shuffled in. Towards mid-day exasperated officers strove to avail themselves of the frequent halts to water and feed. Buckets would be unhooked from their places under the wagons, and the drivers, leaning out and scooping the water up from the ditches, would perhaps get so far in the watering performance when there would be a hurried order to 'Get mounted,' the buckets would be

emptied, the drivers hurriedly remount and move on again—to halt again perhaps within a hundred yards. No officer dare halt or hold his section of the column to complete his watering and feeding because the orders were imperative to press on and avoid halting the whole. A halt to feed was actually made about 2 P.M. when it was plain that there was no hope of getting the column in, as had been intended, by the early afternoon; but the halt was so short that there could be no attempt to cook food or make a hot drink for the men. They ate cold bully beef and biscuit while the horses fed, and finished their meal in the saddle when the horses moved again.

During the afternoon it grew steadily colder, and the rain drizzled on without ceasing. The road ran parallel now with the firing line, and as the darkness fell the horizon was lit continually with rising and falling belts of light from the trench flares, while the guns flashed quick leaping and vanishing gusts of vivid light, rolled and grumbled and roared incessantly. The rattle and splutter of rifle fire swelled to what one might have thought an alarming nearness when the road twisted in towards the firing line, or a falling away of the ground or change in the wind allowed the sound to carry better, dropped away again to no more than a distant crackle as a belt of wood shut it off or the road ran wide out from the battle line.

But of all these things the men on the road were heedless. They were concerned only with the slowness of the journey, the wish for it to end, the approach of dark long before it could be completed. The column carried no lights, and as the night shut down the road under the horses' feet became almost invisible to the eyes of the drivers sitting on their horses or box seats. Each lead driver had to be content to follow close on the tracks of the wagon in front of him, to hold his tired horses up when they stumbled, to halt them quickly when the wagon ahead halted, to move them on again instantly on the other vehicle starting. Every man kept his eyes carefully away from the dancing lights on the horizon, because watching them for a few seconds meant a temporary total blindness and the vanishing of the road beneath them when they came to look down, and this driving in the dark was quite bad enough without that.

The inevitable happened at last. A team driven too close to the road-side brought its wagon wheels within a foot of the ditch, just at a part, unfortunately, where the road-edge sloped sharply to

the steep side of the ditch. The 'long-rein driver' perched on the box called a sharp word of warning and swung his wheelers to the left, felt the wagon beneath him skid sideways, lurch suddenly, sink sharply 'by the stern' and halt abruptly. The driver of the next team saw what had happened, shouted to the other drivers behind him, wrenched his horses' heads clear of the bogged wagon and tried to pull up. But the horses, jerked from their sleepy plodding, swerved, plunged, slithered wildly on the wet road; the wagon wheels, gripped fast by the sharp thrust of the brake, failed to bite on the slippery surface, skidded forward, butted the wheelers heavily, slewed, slithered again and brought up with a splintering jar and a rear wheel fast locked in the wheel of the bogged wagon. The near wheeler of the second team, floundering and splashing and scrambling wildly for foothold, caught the bump of the wagon, fell, and slid wholesale into the ditch. The road was completely and effectually blocked.

Now the ditches in this part of Flanders are anything from about three to six feet deep, and their sides are cut down as straight and smooth as a wall; in winter they are full to the brim with ice-cold water, and their bottom is an unplumbed depth of mud of the consistency of molasses and the tenacity of fish glue. From all of which you will understand and appreciate the difficulty of rescuing the trapped wagon and horse, although you will never, unless you have experienced it, understand the wetness, the cold, the exasperating stupidity of the horse, the monumental bulk and weight and the passive resistance of a wet and mud-plastered wagon, the bitter unpleasantness of the whole job.

Actually, although this may appear surprising, the salving of the horse was a greater difficulty than the restoration of the wagon to the road. The wagon had to be unloaded it is true, but after that a plank pushed sloping down under the wheel, a swarm of men clustering and clutching on the wheels and tailing on a couple of drag-ropes, brought the concern out with a rush. Then the team was hooked in again and the wagon rolled off, and with a chorus of cries, of scuffling hoofs, of grinding wheels, the column halted behind the stalled wagons came to life and rumbled on their way. The horse made a longer and more temper-raising job. Driver Jim Ruff, of the A.S.C., had always had an inordinate pride in his wheelers, a liking for them that in connection with a human would have been called love, a belief in their intelligence that was beyond doubt. But that night his pride had a muddy fall, his love

a cooling off into annoyance, his belief a staggering blow. 'Golly,' the ditched near-wheeler, displayed a stupidity that, as Driver Ruff assured her, would have disgraced 'a mongrel mule,' an indifference to helping herself, and a calm resignation and acceptance of her fate that respectively, and again in the words of Driver Ruff, 'was more like a oyster than a 'orse' and 'might do for a bloomin' padre, but wasn't no use in the A.S.C.' Driver Ruff, at the first crash of catastrophe, had flung down off his perch and was round at his wheelers' heads in a flash, unhooking 'Wog,' lying quietly on his side in the road and waiting for assistance and instructions, and adjuring the struggling 'Golly' to keep quiet an' not make a fool of herself. 'Golly' took the advice so completely that, having quietened, she refused—although the mud clamped about her legs may have had something to do with it—to move a limb thereafter. At first Ruff and the other drivers called to assist tried to persuade her to get her fore-feet on the bank, then by passing a drag-rope round her fore-legs tried to pull them from under her and up on to firm ground. The only result was to upset her balance and set her slowly sinking sideways until her body was completely covered and only her neck and head were above water. It began to look as if the horse must drown in a four- or five-foot ditch.

Meantime the wagon was man-handled along and into the side of the road and the stream of vehicles resumed their interrupted march, rumbling past a busy rescue party grouped at the ditch-side, working in the light of a couple of lanterns with picks and spades and drag-ropes, to extricate the sunken 'Golly.' At last a shelving cut was made in the bank of the ditch, and Driver Ruff, already three parts soaked with splashings and fumbings to fix a rope correctly about his horse, completed the job and the soaking by plunging boldly into the ditch and passing a couple of ropes under the mare's body. A string of men tailed on to the ropes, and at the word from an A.S.C. officer who had taken charge of the proceedings threw their weight into a regular tug-of-war heave, and hauled the animal out bodily on to the shelving bank, up it, and on to the road.

It was after ten o'clock before the wheelers were hooked in and the wagon swung into the traffic procession, with Driver Ruff soaked and shivering on the box. In ten minutes he had to pull up again for another block somewhere in the darkness ahead. He climbed down and stamped to and fro for full thirty minutes. Then he went and rummaged out a couple of box-lids he had been

saving in his wagon for firewood, and, always keeping a wary ear turned to the road for the sound of callings and crunching wheels that would tell him the transport was on the move again, jumped the ditch, hunted in the darkness of a patch of wood, and managed to collect a small armful of twigs and branches. He split his dry wood, built it up and lit it, his fingers so numbed and shaking that he could scarcely fumble out a match. Under the shelter of his cap—it was still drizzling fine rain—he managed to get a brisk flame going, and when he had it burning strong and bright piled his twigs and branches on it. The wood hissed and sputtered, but caught at last, and tongues of flame began to crackle up, throwing a cheerful radiance on the wet faces and forms of the men who quickly crowded round and a most grateful glow of life-giving warmth on Driver Ruff, crouched with chattering teeth and blue lips close over the blaze. But before the fire had even completely caught there came a distant shout, repeated along and down the line, 'Get mounted—get mounted,' and the sound, far off at first but rapidly coming nearer and nearer, of tramping hoof-beats, scrunching wheels, and the rumble of moving wagons. The men about the fire scattered and ran to their horses, and Ruff had no choice but to leave his precious fire and run with them. The procession started, wagon after wagon—and within two hundred yards halted again. The disgusted Ruff had the mortification of seeing his fire blazing up strongly and cheerfully and immediately surrounded by a fresh crowd of the nearest men. It was too far to go back, since the move might come again any minute, and anyhow Ruff guessed the difficulty he would have in forcing a way to the front of the dense ring about his own fire. He tried to wrap his wet coat closer about him, and sat huddled and shivering on his seat for another half-hour before the way was clear and the wagons crawled on again.

It was nearly midnight when he dragged wearily into camp. He took his horses' bits out, slacked their girths, gave them generous feeds, and when their nosebags were empty hung a net full of hay to the point of the wagon-pole, and then went to the cook-house, where he was given a mess-tin of soup and meat and a mug of hot tea. These things finished to the last bite and drop, he, by special and gracious favour of the cook, took off his soaking boots and hung his wet jacket before the embers of the fire, sat himself beside it, and dropped instantly into deep sleep. This, be it noted, was the only sleep he had been able to have for some thirty-six hours.

The night before the column marched he had been out with his wagon drawing rations from 'Refilling Point,' had been from 6 P.M. on the road, waiting his turn for loading, moving up a wagon's length at a time to the loading-place, where, under the light of a couple of lanterns, men were hacking up cheeses, dismembering sides of bacon, trundling out boxes of bully and biscuits and tins of tea and sugar. Driver Ruff had pulled out as soon as his wagon was loaded, waited for the others to complete their loading, moved on to rejoin his unit with them. Delays and checks on a road already, even at that early hour, astir with traffic, had prevented their reaching the camping-ground until about a couple of hours before the hour fixed to turn out on the march, and that brief time had been fully occupied by Ruff, first in watering and feeding and rubbing down his horses, and then in getting his own breakfast, packing his kit for the road, and harnessing up again.

Now, as may be imagined, he slept heavily, sitting huddled over the half-dead fire, on this his second night out of bed, after a day of wearying and strenuous work—and in case that be not properly understood it may be remarked that sitting on the hard wooden seat of a jolting wagon, bumping and jarring over a rough road, holding a pair of 'heavy draught' horses and steering them with a constantly needed care, hauling them up every few minutes, all these things are actually tiring hard physical work.

But he only slept for half an hour. At the end of that time he was shaken roughly awake and told to get a move on, and to fall in outside the lines before hooking in his horses. He rose stiffly, sore in every joint and aching in every limb as if he had been beaten and bruised with a club. The fire was dead and he was chilled to the marrow with the cold that had struck in from his wet clothes, with the more miserable cold that comes out of late and insufficient sleep. He shook like a man in the ague, and his teeth chattered as he thrust his arms into the clammy dampness and coldness of his jacket's clinging sleeves. Putting on his boots was sheer torture. They were icy cold, and the wet leather was stiff and hard as a board. Altogether he was just about as miserable, cold, and uncomfortable as a man can be, as he hobbled stiffly from the cook-house into the bitter rawness of the winter morning. As he went out one of the cooks came in and commenced to make up the fire, and it suddenly struck Driver Ruff what a magnificent and enviable job a cook had, always messing about with a warm fire and hot

water and other of the pleasantest things in life. The cook, roused from a warm straw bed in the cold of one o'clock to light a fire with damp wood, probably held a different opinion of the pleasures of his office. Ruff had three minutes with his horses before the 'Fall in' was called. They whickered and nuzzled at him, each jealously pushing the other's head aside as he spoke to them and rubbed their noses and pulled their ears. 'After all, Golly,' he said, 'a cook don't have horses; eh, Wog?' and at that thought the cook's job lost its savour and a gleam of content warmed the driver's soul.

A figure suddenly appeared in the shape of lamp-illuminated breeches and boots and a blot of shadow above them, and his sergeant spoke briskly: 'Hullo, Ruff. Merry Christmas.'

'Lumme!' said Driver Ruff. 'If I hadn't clean forgot—same to you, sergeant.'

'An' may we see the next at 'ome,' said the sergeant. 'Now what about this pair o' yours? Had a stiffish day yesterday, didn't they?'

Ruff told him briefly but pungently the sort of day they had had and the work they had done. He was so eloquent on their behalf—quite omitting any mention of his own sorrows—that the sergeant promised to manage it somehow that they'd get a light wagon-load that day and the other wagons share the balance.

Driver Ruff began to feel the world not so bad a place after all, and even the briefly outlined programme of the day's work to begin at once and keep on till evening did not cast him down. 'They'll do it easy with a light load,' he said cheerfully.

The 'Fall in' was called, and wondering rather at this unusual item of the morning's work, the men fell in at the end of the horse lines, standing in an ankle-deep porridge of mud.

Their officer addressed them shortly, an N.C.O. beside him with a lantern, and another with a handful of envelopes and a bundle of cardboard boxes. The wagons, said the officer, would go to Refilling Point, load, march together from there and rejoin the Division at their new camp, separate there, and each take their rations to their own units. And because he might not see them together again that day he had paraded them then to wish them a happy Christmas and good luck, and to give them a little present that had been sent out to every man in the Expeditionary Force.

One by one the men received a photograph of the King and Queen with a message written on the back, and a brass tobacco-

box containing tobacco and cigarettes and the Christmas wishes of Princess Mary.

'Bloomin' 'andsome,' said one driver admiringly. 'I'm goin' to send mine 'ome to be kep' for me. There'll be bags o' new troops out 'ere in the spring, but we'll allus 'ave these to show we was out wi' the first crush.'

'My dad's got 'is Queen's chocolate box yet that she gave the first lot out in S'th Africa,' said Driver Ruff. 'I'll be upsides with 'im now.'

'I been thinkin' this week past,' said a third, 'that I never knew anythin' less like Christmas comin'. It seems more like it now somehow.'

And so 'somehow' it did. One might hardly expect a handful of men, turned out in the raw cold small hours of a winter morning, standing in mud over their boots, with a long weary day's work and a bare half night's uncomfortable sleep behind them, and another wet and weary day ahead, to rise with any enthusiasm to a call for 'three cheers for the King and Queen.' But they did it, the 'H'ray' leaping eagerly and cheerfully close on the last sound of the word, of the officer's 'Hip-hip-hip——.'

And Driver Ruff's was the first and loudest and gayest voice of the lot.

INTO GERMANY ON THE EVE OF WAR.

BY W. E. DE B. WHITTAKER.

EARLY in 1914 there had been various schemes in being with the object of crossing the Atlantic by aeroplane under the terms of a prize offered by a London print. Two alone of these were in any way practicable, one by an English retired naval officer on an aeroplane provided at the expense of an American millionaire, and the other by the late Mr. Gustav Hamel, who was to have flown from Newfoundland on an English aeroplane, and who would have been financed by English money. Mr. Hamel was drowned in the English Channel on May 23, when the arrangements for the great flight were in a very advanced stage. A few weeks later Mr. H. S. Keating came forward and made private arrangements to take over part of the organisation which had been brought together earlier in the year. He intended himself to make the proposed attempt to fly from Newfoundland to Ireland at his own expense. This personal assumption of the burden of the entire cost made the attempt one of pure sport without any hope of gain, as the expenditure must of necessity very greatly exceed the amount of the prize offered.

Harry Sheehy Keating, an Irishman by birth, a one-time subaltern in the Grenadier Guards, had spent a year or two in the United States and in Mexico, during which period he had become an aviator. Of an adventurous disposition, he welcomed any form of sport or daring that would relieve the monotony of existence—before the war.

The selection of an aeroplane on which to make the Atlantic flight was a matter of no little difficulty. We heard that on July 10 Herr Boehm had flown at Johannisthal on an Albatross biplane for twenty-four hours twelve minutes without once alighting. We decided therefore that we would go to Berlin and see what the Albatross Company could do for us.

As we had neither of us travelled in Holland or Germany we determined to motor from the Hook of Holland to Berlin and back. The threat of war which by now filled all the London news sheets we did not believe. 'Wolf' had been cried so often. The Sarajevo murder and its immediate results would drift into history in

company with Fashoda and Agadir and no blood at all would be spilt.

An accident detained us on the way to Harwich, so that we missed Saturday and Sunday's boats, and only landed at the Hook in the very early morning of Tuesday, July 27, and at once entered into a fog of mystery which did not lift entirely until we reached the Hague on our return journey on August 5. We neither of us knew a word of the language of either country which we were to visit, and the daily papers contained what were to us merely cabalistic symbols.

We crossed the German frontier a mile or two beyond Oldenzaal and by dinner time we had reached Rheine. Here the weather changed. The sun disappeared and a depressing soft rain began to fall. We dined uncomfortably and wondered a little irritably why the German people should be so excited. We knew no reason.

Anxious to reach Berlin with as little delay as possible we left Rheine after dinner and drove through the darkness and pouring rain and appalling roads towards Osnabruck. We had no windscreen and the hood therefore became valueless. Keating with characteristic determination drove while I crouched in the bottom of the car. Both of us were drenched by the time we reached the Kaiserhof Hotel at Osnabruck and the car was in a pitiful state. We felt that Germany was giving us no adequate welcome. Our host, a man of charming manners, told us that the mobilisation orders were about to be issued, and that shortly the deceitful Russian would be taught a lesson of value. We were asked, a little eagerly, if England would assist, and those who listened were obviously disappointed when we said we thought she would not interfere.

In the morning, as it still rained, we bought a large sheet of celluloid as a substitute for the long-broken windscreen. At a later date we bitterly regretted ever having seen or heard of this celluloid. As the rain still fell we did not leave until the late afternoon, and therefore did not get further than Minden when night fell. Both of us were angry, chiefly owing to Keating's total inability to read a route in a Continental Guide, which was, in any case, quite inaccurate. Here at Minden, where our ancestors had fought as allies with the Germans in the year of victory, 1759, there were unmistakable signs of approaching war. The hotel (Stadt London) was packed with officers and their families eating a fond farewell lest on the morrow the worst might come. Dinner passed to the clicking of heels and an orgy of ceremonial salutes by officers

who were about to bid good-bye to 'review-order' for years to come.

In the streets the tramp of the troops, the clatter of horses' hoofs, and the rumble of iron-shod wheels continued throughout the night. While here we learnt that Austria had on the day before declared war on Serbia, and that soon the Emperor's eagles would end all Balkan troubles for all time.

On Thursday the weather cleared and the sun shone. We passed through Hanover, where we bought tiny silk flags of the German States with some faint idea of showing the people that we did not really dislike them. In Brunswick we ate sandwiches and drank very dark beer from huge china mugs while we sat in an old oak-panelled hall with a high roof also of oak.

The bridge-keepers in Magdeburg took toll of us as we passed through during the early afternoon in high hopes of reaching the capital early in the evening. The road improved still more and there was but little traffic to detain us. For long stretches our speed never dropped much below sixty miles an hour. The gods seemed to be smiling. We forgot the worries induced by the bad maps and the German food and became for a space almost happy. When ten miles from Brandenburg I tried to pass a large cart on the proper side and promptly ran into it, with disastrous results to one of our front wheels and to both head lamps. After changing the wheel we managed to proceed, only to find when six miles from Potsdam and three miles from the nearest garage that we had no more petrol. At the same time a tyre gently subsided and our troubles were complete. At this point our very frayed tempers collapsed entirely and we each accused the other of being responsible for the existence of Germany and all its ills! Mercifully all troubles come to an end in time and we reached Potsdam before ten o'clock.

The Hotel Stadt Königsberg where we stayed was also full of officers and those dependent on them. A curious note of suppressed excitement was obvious to strangers like ourselves, though at the time we were quite unable to account for it. Serbia was surely too small to affect the German officer caste to such an extent.

The next day, July 31, a Friday, we left the car under repair at a garage in Potsdam and went by train to Johannisthal through Berlin. We saw the directors of two leading German aeronautical firms—the Albatross and the L.V.G.—only to find that in neither case could they undertake any work of the nature we desired, as they were far too busy supplying aircraft to the German and

Austrian Governments. They would, they said, require at least six months in which to complete any order. We, on the other hand, had only six weeks to spare. The Albatross Company asked us to call again on the following day in order that we might again meet the board of directors. As nothing more could be done during the day we paid a mark apiece and went into the public part of the aerodrome. No military guard was to be seen save over the great Zeppelin shed, which was empty, its usual tenant having flown to Posen the day before.

While we waited we saw eleven Albatross biplanes leave for Austria by air, piloted by Austrian officers, each accompanied by a mechanic. The presence of very obvious organisation and the entire absence of any excitement or confusion impressed us both. Clearly German aeronautics had left the purely experimental stage, and the aeroplane had become as much a part of military life as had the motor-car years before. The method of construction and the degree of finish of each machine showed the existence of a settled industry. While until the beginning of the war the average English aeroplane had the appearance of being the only one of its type, a step in a series of experiments, the German aeroplane of the time was as finished and complete as if it were one of a batch of a thousand. All that was practically possible at that date was to be found on these German machines which were so soon to test their prowess against the English.

During dinner at Potsdam the head waiter stood in the middle of the room and recited, amidst general enthusiasm, the speech the Kaiser had delivered from the balcony of his palace in Berlin during the afternoon. True patriotism was shown. The day had come and the training and hopes of a century were to be put to the test at last.

After dinner we walked through the crowded streets and watched the excited people snatch the single news sheets from the newsboys as they passed along. Great masses of enthusiastic youth rushed along the streets singing national songs, of which 'Deutschland über Alles' was the most popular. The beautiful strains of the Austrian National Anthem were often heard. Every officer who appeared from any direction was cheered loudly, and even the police were not unpopular on this night of nights. We, though we were obvious foreigners and quite possible Englishmen, were not molested in any way. Long after we had gone to bed the noise continued without intermission, until even Keating lost some of

his joyous enthusiasm for war in his greater and more immediate desire for sleep.

Shortly before noon on Saturday, August 1, we again went to Johannisthal, this time by car. We arrived at the aerodrome at about half-past one o'clock and decided that, as our interview with the directors of the Albatross Company was sure to be short, we would have lunch on the way back to Berlin. It was a foolish decision, as after events will show. We found sentries at every entrance to the ground. By the small door leading into the garden in front of the Albatross offices stood a German soldier in the service dress of a regiment of the line. As we passed in he said something long in German and seemed to wish to prevent our entry. Keating smiled, which is not usual when one deals with German soldiers on duty, and the sentry was too surprised to stop us. Once inside we were met by the works manager, a Herr Huttney, who had learnt English in the United States of America when acquiring merit in his early youth. He took us before several of the directors of the company and we again talked of the purchase of an aeroplane. There was an atmosphere of restraint and suspicion which, in the light of later knowledge, was not unnatural. Now we were told that no machine at all could be sold to us for many months, as the army required them all; 'even,' they said, 'Austria will not be allowed to purchase more.' Keating offered to buy an Albatross which we knew to be in England. In reply we were shown a telegram from London saying that aeroplane had just been commandeered by the Admiralty! This incident was the first to bring home to us the possibility of Great Britain joining in the new war. There was an unwieldiness about the conversation that showed us they did not desire to do business with us, and so after farewells we were conducted outside the boundaries of the grounds by the works' manager. Here to our amazement, and at the time amusement, we found two soldiers, fully armed and rationed, standing by the car. When I tried to start the engine, I was pressed back gently by rifle and bayonet. Herr Huttney asked for reasons and was told, or so he said, that an officer had been sent for and until his arrival we could not leave. So, resignedly and hungrily, for it was by now four o'clock and we had had no lunch, we sat in the car with Herr Huttney as company. He, too, was not permitted to leave, if his own statement was to be believed. For nearly two hours we sat here waiting for the officer who did not come. At six o'clock we were moved, under instructions from an N.C.O., to

an open-air guard-room by the Zeppelin shed and just inside the aerodrome fence. Here our wait continued, relieved a little by some lager beer and leberwurst sandwiches, brought by the kindness of one of our guard. At dusk we were taken by two policemen in plain clothes before the officer commanding the aerodrome, who had an extemporised orderly room in the smaller dirigible shed. With him were several subalterns of infantry and of the flying section of the service. None of the officers in the room admitted to any knowledge of English or French, and so Herr Huttney, who was still in semi-arrest with us, had perforce to translate all that was said on either side. A little later, while Keating was being cross-examined, I asked, quite without malice, the officer nearest me whether he knew London. Before he had had time to remember whether he knew English or not he had answered clearly that Piccadilly Circus he did not know but London it was so dull! After this slip he made no further secret of his knowledge of English and talked freely.

The commandant, after asking our business and being told the truth, was clearly sceptical. Finally, as he could get nothing from us but what was true, he handed us over to the care of the two policemen. We were ordered to proceed to the Central Police Office in Berlin, and into our car, designed by the makers as a three-seater, we crowded Herr Huttney, the two policemen, and ourselves. Keating drove, and an hour later we found ourselves in a long dismal corridor three storeys up in Berlin's Scotland Yard. I was in the last stage of depression, as Herr Huttney had just told us that he feared we should not get less than five years' detention as potential spies. In addition we were hungry and cold. After a short wait we were taken before a civilian official who, with the utmost courtesy, cross-examined us. We were searched and all our belongings from my German word-books to the remnants of a sandwich were laid solemnly on the table. Some tiny films I had were developed rapidly somewhere in the building. After an anxious examination, lasting perhaps half an hour and which was conducted in a language of which we did not know a word, we were released with the advice to leave Berlin with as little delay as possible. As we left the room the senior official said that he hoped our respective countries would remain friendly for the salvation of the entire world.

We stayed the night at a quiet hotel in a street parallel to the Unter den Linden and persuaded Herr Huttney to dine with us.

He was obviously ill at ease and left us as soon as could be done with courtesy. Even our experience of the afternoon had not brought home to us any real understanding of the true situation. We still thought that we had been arrested as a matter of German habit, and that all would be well in a week or so when the dangers of war had again passed by. Our German guest was clearly, though we did not know it at the time, unwilling to be seen in public with us. He left, and weeks later we heard as a matter of rumour that he had met his death at the hands of the authorities under suspicion of giving assistance to enemy spies! It may not be so or we may not have been the spies in question. One hopes not.

At the Embassy we managed to borrow some money from the military attaché and were given a passport on which, unfortunately, both our names were entered. We were told that if we wished for freedom we had better endeavour to leave Germany at once. When we said we intended to motor to the Dutch frontier some doubt was shown as to whether we should be permitted to travel far. Nobody doubted for a moment what the end would be. War must come and England would be in it.

At eleven o'clock we went to a garage and filled the car with everything necessary for a non-stop journey to Holland, as we realised that a stoppage on the road would probably become permanent. The chief trouble was petrol, as an order restricting the sale was expected at any moment. Consequently, while Keating talked to the old caretaker by means of my phrase-book, I collected petrol cans and put them under the dickey seat. Then, in order that the car might not be seized, we drove away from the garage and left the car outside the hotel for the rest of the night. Everybody, including the police, was so excited that no complaint was made.

This settled, we went into a large restaurant organised on American lines, where one paid a fixed sum on entering and then helped oneself to any of dozens of different small dishes arranged on stands. This place was thronged with people, who, with Teutonic thoroughness, did not permit their excitement of the moment to interfere with their meals. At first we were shy of speech, fearing our English tongue would cause trouble. After a space we began to talk and then, to our amazement, a man at the same table asked if we were English and, hearing the truth, promptly became embarrassingly pleasant and insisted on drinking our national health in dark lager. Others to whom we spoke also showed signs of pleasure and for a moment or two we were popular.

Then for the first time we learnt how keen the German people were at that time on an effective naval and military alliance with England. From day to day on our way to the coast we were to find this the general feeling.

We left the hotel at five on the morning of Sunday, August 2, and drove out of Berlin by the Unter den Linden. The weather was perfect, and with consequent optimism we hoped to reach Holland before nightfall. No stop was to be made until the Dutch frontier had been passed.

In Potsdam, as we passed through, all was calm. Patriotism is very tiring. The streets were deserted and we drove through without notice. All went well with us. The sun was shining and the road, at this stage of the journey, was good. The next forty kilometres passed at the rate of one a minute and before seven o'clock we were in Brandenburg. Here ill-fortune again caught us up. As we crossed the bridge over the Havel a tyre burst. We had no spare inner tube and so Keating went to a garage near by in order to get replacements. His speech revealed him a foreigner, the news spread rapidly and by the time he returned to the car a large crowd had assembled round us. At first we thought their interest to be mere curiosity, but we soon saw that it was underlain by suspicion. To avoid them, and in order to change tyres quickly, we drove the car into a narrow courtyard near by and began work. The crowd increased and showed signs of following us into the yard. At this point we closed the yard gates, which were of iron scroll work covered with plate glass through which our movements could be watched.

The mob still increased and its attitude was threatening. A man whose house abutted on the yard, anxious as to the safety of his property, sent for the police. Shortly afterwards a sergeant arrived who, luckily, spoke English according to American practice. He had, he told us immediately on arrival, been in San Francisco during the earthquake, hence his knowledge of our language. From him we learnt that the crowd in the road believed us to be Russian spies and were taking measures to prevent our escape. At our request he sent for an officer, to whom we explained our position. Though the latter showed no signs of enthusiasm he believed our statement after examining our passport and driving licence. He then left, telling his sergeant to see us out of the town as soon as we were ready. After the police interview the crowd melted away and we suffered no further inconvenience.

By this time we were hungry and asked our friend the sergeant if he could buy us food. A boy was sent for sausage sandwiches and beer. We drank with the sergeant to the health of Great Britain and Germany and to the confusion of the rest of the world. It is easy to admire a nation when one is at its mercy. It is easier still when one realises the magnificent patriotism and unity of purpose of that same nation. When, the tyre fitted, it was time to leave, we endeavoured to pay the small boy for the food he had brought, only to be stopped by the sergeant, who said we were his guests and that he would not like us to leave with a bad opinion of his country! Firm friends, we left that sergeant with deep regret, as by now we knew our passage through the country was not to be pleasant.

At Magdeburg we were stopped by the Customs after crossing the bridge over the Elbe. We were made in full glare of the public eye to demonstrate the innocence and inadequacy of our wardrobe. Here, too, the roll of celluloid bought at Osnabruck came under suspicion. The police argued that it could have no possible use on the car and that it must be part of a photographic apparatus, the rest of which we were wilfully concealing. After Keating's wonderful use of my incomprehensible phrase-book and many vivid gesticulations from myself, the police pretended they understood and reluctantly let us travel onwards.

From this place onwards our trouble intensified. So long as we continued to move and showed no hesitation all was well, but no sooner did we stop to examine a signpost at cross roads than we would be surrounded by an excited mob of men and women armed to the teeth with muskets that appeared to date from Waterloo and with spades, picks, and pitchforks of a later date but of no less sanguinary appearance. It was nervous work endeavouring to explain ourselves to the local interpreter, probably the parish priest, while any moment the varied contents of any of these guns might shatter such brains as worry had left us.

From Hanover onwards we were stopped at practically every village by patrols of the type described above. That these posts were installed officially was obvious from the attempt at a uniform worn by most of these men. At each place our papers were examined laboriously by the padre or the leading shopkeeper, in each case without much enlightenment, for in accordance with British insularity our passport was entirely in English.

From these causes our average speed dropped to eight miles

an hour, and our nerves began to show signs of weariness. One never knew from one moment to another when we might be detained and possibly killed in a fit of misplaced enthusiasm. We had heard, how I cannot say, that no motoring was permitted after dark. Consequently, as when darkness fell we had reached Minden, we decided to stay the night at the Hotel Stadt London. This for the second time and under such different conditions. On this day there was doubt whether we should reach home again for years or, if an easy accident came, perhaps never. The hotel was crowded with officers, this time mostly in service kit. The dining-room rang with excited talk as to the future and all were flushed with thoughts of the days to come.

As we dined we sent for a police officer, in order that by reporting ourselves in time we should avoid delay in leaving on the following morning. An officer arrived so speedily that we could not fail to realise that he had been in waiting. We asked if we might leave at dawn. He said courteously that as the Military Commandant wished to see us at eight o'clock next day it would not be possible for us to get away before breakfast. With courtesy he refused to drink with us and with courtesy he bowed himself out. He was so pleasant that we felt that our affairs had become more serious during the day.

Shortly after two o'clock I was awakened by the sound of marching and the rumbling of wagons. From that hour onwards until dawn battalion after battalion passed on its way to entrain for some battle front as yet unrevealed to us. Shortly after dawn troops ceased to pass for some hours and we were able to sleep again. During the wakeful period we each discovered, as we found on comparing notes next day, that a sentry was on duty in the corridor outside our rooms.

The next morning we reported to the Commandant at his office, taking the car with us in case we got immediate leave to proceed. When we arrived we found the Commandant engaged and we had to wait in an outer room with a schoolmaster who had been brought in to act as our interpreter. While we sat here admiring a large engraving of the picture of the German troops greeting Admiral Seymour's seamen in China (1900) hung on the wall over the door to the Commandant's room, an old man was brought in by two policemen. He was crying bitterly in the hopeless, dreary manner of the aged. His sobs were painful to hear and we asked our interpreter who he might be and if we could do anything to assist him. The answer

was 'No, as he is a Russian spy who is charged with being concerned in an attempt to dynamite the railway bridge over the river. He will, it is undoubted, be shot!' The charge may or may not have been true, but that afternoon the old man was shot after a summary trial. It made Keating and myself less optimistic as to our chances.

After a short wait we were brought before the Commandant, who listened to our story with courtesy and with obvious trust. We said nothing about the reason of our visit. The Commandant was disposed to believe that we were not spies, and would, I think, have let us go on our way had not another officer in the room interfered. He asked us rather roughly why at such a disturbed time we came to Germany. Keating then explained that we wished to buy an aeroplane. This revelation altered everything, and the Commandant, after talking earnestly for some minutes with his brother officer, told us, none too willingly, we thought, to return to our hotel and not to leave it until permission was given. In the meantime he would wire to the British Embassy for confirmation of our story. We now gave up hope, for we knew it was extremely unlikely that the Embassy would ever receive the wire.

We walked sadly back to the hotel, leaving the car in the charge of the police officials. Regretfully we thought of all the beautiful wars breaking out in every direction in which it was now unlikely we would be able to take part. War is inspiring and attractive to all who have not fought.

At the hotel we sat moodily by a large window looking into the street and drank lager beer while we watched battalion after battalion pass on their way to entrain for the front. Three days before these men had either been on reserve in civil occupations or had been wearing the picturesque uniforms of peace. Very few of them had then known what the service dress was like and none had worn it. Now, in strict accordance with the plans of forty years, each man in the great striking force was fully equipped for the greatest campaign in history.

One point struck us unfavourably, and this was the painful newness of the boots of yellow undressed leather worn by all. Later, we discovered that this too was a sign of forethought. Each man had in his kit the boots worn and made comfortable by him in times of peace, and the new boots were being worn in these first days that they might be in some manner broken in before action was joined. Had the troops worn their old boots they would, when

footsores, have had no means of getting relief other than taking the boots off and resting their feet. On the other hand, wearing the new boots first, weariness was greatly reduced by changing into the older boots. Such a matter as this, small in itself, may mean the difference between defeat and victory.

Shortly before lunch a Lieutenant Kellerman of a reserve unit of Garrison Artillery called to see us. He said that he had been told that two Englishmen were detained in the town, and that as he admired the English and spoke our language fluently he had come to see what assistance he might be able to render. We were glad to see him. It relieved the monotony, and also he would be able to translate the mystic newspapers to us. But that was not his mission. He talked of England and of America. All good Germans seem to have travelled in America either North or South! It was some little time before we realised that most of his questions were asked with other reasons than that of benevolence. He said that a diary of our travels would be interesting in years to come. Surely we had kept one? And photographs, too, what pleasure they would give to our friends in England when we reached home! But as our visitor would neither drink nor smoke—what honest German does not drink and smoke?—with us we did not care to answer his questions quite as simply as he would have wished. After a space he left us and returned no more. He may have meant well, but in the light of after events it is more probable that he was intended to trap us into some unconsciously guilty admission.

At lunch time the Commandant appeared. He told us that no reply had come from Berlin and that he feared we should find it difficult to get away. His pleasant face showed that he really felt sorry and that it was not pretence. At his request we lunched with him, though the conversation was of necessity spasmodic, since neither party spoke the other's tongue. Yet it was a kindly thought, which counts for much at times of tension. He, in common with most officers of the garrison, lunched daily at the Hotel Stadt London, and our presence at his table went far to make our position more comfortable. The glances of suspicion from other officers in the room died away, and we felt less like escaped convicts than we had during the morning.

Through the kindly offices of a neighbour who spoke English the Commandant asked if we thought England would take part in the war. We said that we did not think our country would interfere, as at that time we imagined the opening war to concern

France, Russia, and Germany alone. The Commandant gravely said that he was not optimistic, for he did not think that England would stand by inactive. War would be bad for both countries. He implied that Germany had for many years desired an alliance with England. United the two nations could sweep the world. This was the view taken by many to whom we spoke during the journey and illustrates in some degree the aims of Modern Germany. The picture of an uncivilised world waiting for enlightenment by the Apostles of Culture in the form of German Army Corps is pathetic to us, but it is, or was, doubtless very vivid to sincere German officers.

At four o'clock we were sent for by the Commandant, who said that no news had arrived from Berlin, but that on his own responsibility he would allow us to leave the town. He signed a statement saying that we had been examined and were permitted to proceed, as we thought this might help us on our way. As he shook hands he said, as our interpreter explained, 'Travel, travel, always travel until the frontier is passed!'

Exasperated by the numerous delays, and apprehensive that our stay in Germany might attain some manner of permanency if further hesitation marked our path, we drove with great speed when on the open road. But rapid progress was not continuous. Two days before we had found progress slow owing to civilian patrols in villages and at cross-roads, but now the vigilance of the German people seemed to have doubled. It was necessary to slow down some distance from these posts, if one desired to avoid over-zealous shots. Five miles was perhaps the longest stage over which our journey was uninterrupted.

In some villages the people were pleasant and believed our statements, in others we were received with suspicion that even our signed note from the Commandant at Minden did not entirely allay.

But nothing worse than mental discomfort came to us until we reached Oldendorf, a large village some thirty-five kilometres from Osnabruck. The road was barricaded half a mile short of the first houses, and we were held up at this point until the 'Hauptmann' arrived to inspect us. While we waited a tall thin man, wearing over his ordinary clothes a long blue smock, apparently a farm labourer by trade, harangued the crowd feverishly, gesticulating the while with a pitchfork. He did not seem to like us. Keating, whose spirits were still high, laughed at him and made matters worse. The oration had no immediate effect, for when the Hauptmann, a little fat man in a bright blue uniform, had seen us

we were permitted to drive on to the village. Here, at the beginning of the main street, we found another barricade and a larger crowd. As we were about to pass the obstruction the man with the pitchfork arrived on a bicycle in a perfect delirium of rage. He accused us of something inexplicable and the crowd at once dragged us from the car. I was made to walk in state with the village policeman, who had just appeared, while Keating drove the car slowly behind us. An English-speaking German came with me and explained that we were to be examined by the Burgomaster at the Town Hall. I had almost reached sanctuary, accompanied by a large and curious crowd, when the fanatic with the pitchfork again tore up on his bicycle and, purple with rage, accused us of, literally, 'making plans of citadels and photographing the country.' At once the crowd turned against me. There was an ugly rush, and I was as near experiencing the fate of De Witt as I shall ever be in this life. Before I was more than half-throttled the policeman managed to get me into the Town Hall, where I could in comparative safety listen to the howls of the mob outside.

Keating, for some reason—perhaps because he always laughed—escaped the full wrath of the mob, though his passenger spat at him, and was brought in safely.

The Burgomaster was charming and, what mattered far more, was possessed of infinite discernment. He examined our baggage, now falling into ruin, and the car, in public, in a gallant attempt to allay suspicion. Despite this, I firmly believe that the villagers of Oldendorf will believe to their dying day that we were two anarchists of Russian extraction. After an anxious hour we were allowed to drive away. At this village, the day before, two Russians, disguised in women's clothing, had been dragged from a car and shot on the spot.

We had hoped to reach Osnabruck before dark, but it was actually ten o'clock when we finally arrived at the hotel. At the entrance to the town, which we reached shortly after nine o'clock, we were taken in charge by a military patrol. But the police alone could give us the necessary permission to travel onwards.

So, attended by a N.C.O., we drove to the head police office at Osnabruck. Again we were made to spread our belongings on the floor and explain each scrap of paper. The deadly sheet of celluloid we offered to the police in the hopes of ending the recurrent trouble, but with no effect. Full of suspicion as to its uses though they might be, yet they would not take it.

We were delayed here about twenty minutes before we were given permission to stay at the Kaiserhof Hotel for the night and to leave Osnabruck early on the following morning. As we left the office our car was held up by the passage of several hundred Russian workmen who had been placed under arrest on the outbreak of war and who were now being taken to an internment camp. Dejected and hopeless they moved miserably through a hissing and booing crowd to the prison which was to be their home until peace came again. Such is discipline in Germany that half a dozen policemen sufficed to keep the mob, ever ready to strike, at bay.

At the Kaiserhof Hotel we were greeted with singular charm by the proprietor, who, though a possible future enemy, did not show any suspicion or displeasure. Nay, rather did he go out of his way to make us truly comfortable, he himself superintending the cooking of our belated dinner.

While we ate there sat at a table near by a party of German students, who with much noise sang patriotic verses and cheered lustily the names of national heroes while they steadily drank tankard after tankard of beer. After a space they began to take interest in us. Glancing from time to time at our table they talked excitedly of 'Englanders' and, from the few words we could understand, of our navy. I was very tired, and under the impression that they desired to pick a quarrel, I went to bed to escape trouble. Keating, on the other hand, scenting an immediate if a minor war, refused to move and did not reach his room until the early hours of the morning. It appears that far from desiring to annoy us they wished us to join them. This Keating did and a short conversation in French followed. The use of this language was quickly banned as unpatriotic and a curious but wonderful version of English was substituted. They were under the impression that England was about to become Germany's ally. Thus combined the two nations were to dominate the world in the manner indicated to us by several others during our travels. These views, so soon to fade, served to create a temporary friendship between Keating and the students, which ended shortly before three in the morning with the joint humming of 'God Save the King,' because, as they said, 'without words it is the National Anthem of both the related countries.' It was a happy evening, in that it formed so great a contrast to other nights of the same week.

The next morning we left on the last lap of our journey through Germany rather late, slightly after eleven o'clock, owing to the

encouraging friendliness of the previous night. This day was August 4 and in honour of its high destiny was one of sunlit splendour. Our innkeeper, in the smallness of his bill and his obvious readiness to give credit until the end of the war in case our money had run short, showed that some Germans are not devoid of the kindlier instincts of humanity. Human nature is the same the world over by whatever title the races may be labelled.

With usual delays from road patrols we passed slowly through Lottë, Westerkappeln, and Höveringhausen. In Ibbenburgen we were held up by a long patriotic procession, chiefly of children dressed brilliantly in white, and carrying banners decorated in some cases with religious symbols and in some with the armorial device of Westphalia. As they walked they sang, with the softness of childhood, songs of the countryside.

It was pleasant when in the midst of our worries to listen to the beat of childish feet and the echo of childish voices between the lines of high narrow houses of this quiet Westphalian village. Curious incidents, unimportant in themselves, remain in one's memory for all time.

We had intended to drive out of the country through Bentheim, the same route by which we entered. But when the police examined us at Rheine, though they showed no desire to detain us, they told us that we must divert our course through Burgsteinfurt and leave Germany by Gronau, reaching Enschede in Holland. This meant a journey increased by forty miles, a serious matter under the then existing critical conditions.

The first few miles out of Rheine passed by with surprising ease. Then as we passed along a straight stretch of road close to Ochtrup we were stopped by a patrol standing or rather reeling in front of a public-house. These half-dozen men, bored with inaction, had improved the shining hour by drinking beer until all the world seemed changed. They were armed heavily with ancient rifles, each obviously loaded. Our unfortunate belongings were again dragged into view and a hilarious examination followed, the while two of the more drunken men tried to show their belief that we were good fellows by kissing us both with beery enthusiasm. Finally, we were allowed to go amidst their drunken cheers. We had covered about half a mile when several bullets whistled by, despatched by our late friends as a further token of their joyous sporting instincts! None hit us and we passed on into Ochtrup, where the most amazing incident of all befell us. We were taken

into the Town Hall and were passed as unsuspecting when, suddenly, the manner of our captors changed from smiles to frowns. A chauffeur had arrived who swore that he recognised us as two suspects who had escaped from custody at Buckedorf, a village some miles on the Berlin side of Minden. Nothing could shake him in his accusation and things looked unutterably black for us. Tempers are hasty when war is the common occupation, and sentences of death at the worst are only 'regrettable mistakes' when too much haste has been used. Some open packets of cart-ridges on the table added nothing to the pleasure of our feelings. A woman, who alone could speak English with any fluency, was brought in to translate and she, too, did little to improve our position. From her attitude one supposes she had met incivility in England during her visit to our country.

Suddenly it struck us that perhaps the man had seen us at Minden, and as we had a pass from that town all would be well if we could convince him of his mistake. To our joy he at once admitted that he was wrong and we were permitted to leave.

On arrival at Gronau we found that the car must remain in Germany, so we drove to the station in order to find out whether trains still ran. Here, to our surprise, we were again arrested by the Customs authorities and were hauled before the Burgomaster and some local councillors. We had as translator a German-American who, unpleasant in his prosperous appearance, suggested we should answer the questions in a way prompted by him. This we refused, as the object of lying did not appear clear to us. It was well, as later it appeared that one at least of those present could speak English with ease.

At this stage in the journey appeared one of those amazing coincidences that occur as one passes through life. As our names were given in the course of the written evidence, an old councillor asked me in English if I came from Lancashire. When I admitted this he said that forty years before he had been working in that county and during that time he had been befriended by a man of my name. It appeared on a further description that this good Samaritan was closely related to me! This fortunate incident had, I am sure, some effect on our position.

In the end the Burgomaster telephoned to the G.O.C. at Munster, putting our case as favourably as possible, and describing us as Americans. Permission was given by this higher authority for our release. A local mill owner who had given us every assistance

garaged the car, and undertook to take care of it. Thus did we part in a friendly mood.

An hour later we entered Enschede after a long argument with the Customs officer, who thought us too dirty to be respectable. Next day found us at the Hague, where, in our rags but happy, we dined at the Hôtel des Indes. Here we read the *Times* and heard of the declaration of war. That night we crossed to Harwich.

Note.—Keating on arrival in town applied for and was given a commission in the Royal Flying Corps. Later he transferred to the Irish Guards. On January 20, 1915, he was killed in France during bombing practice by the premature explosion of a bomb which he was using for demonstration purposes. So ended a life of enthusiasm. The world lost a very gallant gentleman in Harry Sheehy Keating. Yet

At the door of life, at the gate of breath
There are worse things waiting for men than death.

JAN ISSEL.

IN the month of August 1914 Mr. Haseldine of Culme House in South Devon was as clearly persuaded as every other patriotic Briton that we had got to beat the Germans, cost what it might, and what it might chance to cost him individually he well knew, his only son being an officer in the Guards. So he was scarcely disposed to sympathise with a man who, having no less than four sons, made it a great grievance that the youngest of them was threatening to enlist.

'What do you expect me to say to the lad, Issel?' he asked of the ruddy, grey-bearded tenant who had come to beg his aid. 'I can't tell him he is wrong if he wants to fight for his country.'

'Aw, 'tidden that, Squire,' returned Farmer Issel, shaking his head. 'I don't b'lieve as Jan feels a call to go an' fight no more'n what his brothers du; but a's that quare an' opinionated us can't make nothin' of un. Can't spare un nayther, with harvest comin' on an' all, that's the trewth.'

It was certainly the truth that labour was scarce and that the moment was ill chosen for withdrawing a pair of strong arms from Bratton Farm. Moreover, those were the early days of the war, when it had not yet become apparent that England must raise and equip a huge force. Therefore, after some further parley, Mr. Haseldine promised that he would give young John Issel a word or two of sound advice, and, with that end in view, he suggested to his daughter Mildred, a few hours later, that they should make Bratton Farm the object of their customary afternoon ride.

It was beautiful, hot weather, promising well for the approaching harvest, and as Mr. Haseldine jogged through the lanes, on either side of which were broad fields of ripening oats and barley, he remarked to his companion, with a laugh and a sigh, that some people didn't know when they were well off. Patriotism was right enough, and he would be the last to discourage it; yet before a man decided to plunge into all the trials and miseries of a campaign he ought at least to make sure that his duty did not lie nearer home.

And something of that sort was what the Squire presently said to a slim, dark-eyed young man who, turning round at the sound of the horses' hoofs, raised his arms from the gate over which he had been leaning and touched his hat. Jan Issel listened respect-

fully, appeared to be a little troubled, and had no very definite answer to make. What could be gathered was that his mother had been pressing him hard, that he did not want to vex her—nor yet nobody else—but that he reckoned he would have to go all the same. Oh, not until after harvest, for sure ; he had given a promise to that effect and would keep it.

'Quite right, my boy,' said Mr. Haseldine, gathering up his reins. 'Think it well over ; don't be in a hurry. You may be wanted at the front by-and-by, and so may your brothers ; we don't any of us know yet what lies before us. But for the present it seems to me that you're more wanted where you are. Now, Mildred, if you'll wait here for me, I'll be with you again in a few minutes. I must just see Issel and tell him about several things that I forgot to mention this morning.'

Thus Miss Haseldine was left in the company of a youth of whose existence she had hitherto been but vaguely aware, but whose handsome face and great sad eyes made appeal to her. She began to question him, and, either because her pretty face and kindly blue eyes made appeal to him or because of some subtle suggestion of sympathy in her voice, he spoke with a good deal more ease and openness than he had shown in replying to her father. It was not only the outbreak of war, he confessed, that had put it into his head to take up soldiering. Many and many a time before had he thought of that way of escape from Bratton—because it was from Bratton that he yearned to escape. No, he hadn't no trouble, without you could call it trouble to be uneasy in your mind ; only he felt as if he must get away.

'I couldn't explain it to you, miss ; I haven't no power o' language. Happen I'm unreasonable, as mother says. Dick and Tom and Bob they don't ask no better'n to plough an' sow an' reap year in, year out ; but with me 'tis different. Reckon as I'd go mazed if I was to stop home for always.'

'I know what is the matter with you,' said Miss Haseldine, smiling ; 'you're bored.'

Well, that might be. The word was not included in Jan's slender vocabulary, but perhaps he was capable of the sensation. Miss Haseldine told him that she was and that a vast number of persons were similarly afflicted. The recognised remedy was work ; but, for obvious reasons, that was not applicable to his case. How about reading as a diversion ? Did he ever open a book ?

This chance shot unexpectedly scored. Jan's big brown eyes

lightened up as he answered that he loved nothing in the world so much as books to read. Unfortunately, he had exhausted the literature of Bratton Farm, which consisted of the Bible, sundry theological works, 'Pilgrim's Progress,' an anthology entitled 'Pearls from the Poets,' and a few dilapidated volumes of the *Family Herald*.

Miss Haseldine said she could introduce him to a rather wider circle of writers than that. 'Come up to the house after dinner this evening and I'll lend you all the books you care to carry away.'

Jan was almost as grateful to the young lady as a starving man would have been for a loaf of bread; yet it was perhaps rather her looks and her voice than her kind offer that compelled his gratitude. Hitherto nobody had understood him—which was the less surprising because he had some difficulty in understanding himself—and he had observed a general disposition to treat him with the indulgence accorded to the mentally deficient. But here at last was a beautiful, beneficent being who not only did not call him a fool but clearly showed, without actually saying so, that she entered into his feelings and shared them. He had often seen her before, in church and elsewhere, but did not remember ever to have heard her speak. After she and her father had ridden away, he dropped his elbows upon the gate once more and for some time thought about her dreamily, with a pleasantly warmed heart, wondering why he had never before noticed her physical beauty. Then he stretched himself and strode off to get the cows in for milking.

Mildred Haseldine, if scarcely beautiful, was as pretty as golden hair, forget-me-not blue eyes, and neat little features could make her. Beneficent she might fairly be called, inasmuch as she was always glad to do a good turn to her neighbours, and this farm lad, with his odd craving for mental nourishment and his rebellion against the monotony of agricultural life, interested her. So as soon as she reached home she laid the library shelves under contribution, selecting 'Ivanhoe,' Tennyson's Poems, Carlyle's 'Past and Present' and Fitchett's 'Deeds that Won the Empire,' as being a sufficiently comprehensive batch to begin with, and handed the volumes to her maid Judith, with instructions that they were to be given to young John Issel, if he should call for them. She observed that Judith blushed; but the circumstance made no impression upon her, Judith's blushes being frequent and for the most part devoid of cause.

As a matter of fact, Judith Combe had some excuse for exhibiting

self-consciousness at the sound of Jan Issel's name. Not very much, it is true ; for in her class of life the fact of ' walking out ' with a young man on Sunday afternoons is not held to commit either of the walkers to subsequent matrimony, and certainly Jan did not consider himself in any way pledged to Judy Combe, whom he had chosen merely because, like his brothers and everybody else, he had to have a female companion of some sort. He liked the gentle, demure lass, was indifferently aware that she was nice-looking (she was in reality decidedly prettier than Miss Haseldine), and even supposed that he might marry her some day. But that, of course, would only be if he should stay at Bratton, instead of going out into the wide world—a contingency which he never cared to contemplate.

An access of shyness led him to ask for Judith when he went up to the great house that evening ; but he was just a trifle disappointed when she joined him, bearing the promised armful of literature, and when he realised that he was not to see his benefactress. Nothing, however, forbade him to talk about her, nor did he say much about anybody or anything else during an interview which took place by starlight in the stable-yard. Judith, who was greatly attached to her mistress, was as laudatory as could be wished, if not particularly informing. Miss Mildred was always doing kind things ; so Judith did not think it strange that she should lend books to Jan Issel if he wanted them ; though it was perhaps rather strange that he should want them. She timidly intimated as much, but received no answer. It was, of course, impossible to explain to Judy Combe what the printed page meant to one who was consumed with curiosity respecting the world in which we dwell and who had no opportunities of coming into contact with a verbal interpreter. It would likewise have been difficult to bring home to her the motives that such a man might have for adopting the profession of arms ; so that subject also was left untouched. For the rest, Jan was eager to say good-night, being still more eager to discover what Miss Mildred thought him capable of appreciating.

Miss Mildred, it may be conjectured, had not given a great deal of thought to the matter ; but she bestowed quite as much pleasure upon her *protégé* as if she had. That night and on several successive nights Jan sat up, devouring the volumes by the light of a single candle long after all the other inmates of the farm were asleep. ' *Ivanhoe*, ' which was pretty plain sailing, delighted him, as did also Fitchett's stirring and admirably related yarns. If he could not always make out what Tennyson was driving at, he loved the

rhythm and melody of his verse, just as he loved the sonorous grandeur of certain chapters in Isaiah and Ecclesiastes, the meaning of which was completely hidden from him. In like manner thousands of people derive genuine enjoyment from listening to a symphony, although they are ignorant of the structure of such compositions and cannot really follow them. But, oddly enough, it was with Carlyle that Jan was best pleased. The bygone abuses and social anomalies against which 'Past and Present' thunders naturally said nothing to him, nor could he trace much connection between them and the chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond. It must also be admitted that he skipped a good many pages. What roused him to enthusiasm was not the writer's theme but his mastery of language and the magnificent, disdainful carelessness with which he displayed it, as though feeling himself big enough to be independent of all rules. Jan Issel, it must be supposed, possessed the literary sense—which indeed, like every other artistic sense, is inborn, not to be acquired. When he went to Culme House to return the books and beg for more, he tried, not over-successfully, to express to Miss Mildred (who received him this time and took him into the library) the intensity of his admiration for a philosopher who is commonly considered to be above the heads of the simple.

'A girt man, miss,' he said—'a powerful man!'

'Oh, yes,' agreed Mildred, surprised and amused, 'he's—picturesque. Hardly at his best in "Past and Present," though. I'll lend you his "French Revolution," which is much more interesting.'

Most leisured readers require a considerable length of time to assimilate that work; Jan, who had practically no leisure between sunrise and sunset, got through it in a week. He read it, as he read most works, with only a dim comprehension but with great contentment. Contentment, in fact, was the blessing bestowed upon him by Miss Haseldine's happy inspiration; so that he spoke no more of joining the Army, while she was rewarded by the respectful thanks of his parents. From Jan himself she received something more than thanks and respect. It was, no doubt, natural enough that his imagination, fired by the novels and plays which she prescribed as occasional alternatives to historical study, should clothe her with the attributes of a heroine of romance. His contentment, for that matter, was perhaps as much the outcome of talks with Miss Mildred as of communings with authors who by themselves might rather have tended to increase the latent

disquietude which they were supposed to have allayed. These talks became frequent during the autumn weeks, occasion for them being willingly supplied by a young lady who could not help finding Jan Issel unusual and interesting. He came out, every now and then, with the quaintest, the most original, the most poetical remarks, and if his hearer sometimes had a little inward laugh, she was very careful not to let her features betray her; because his sensitiveness was no less manifest than his timid devotion. To inspire devotion—especially when it is timid—is seldom disagreeable to any young lady; so Miss Mildred often overtook Jan in the lanes or summoned him to the house; and this was really kind of her, seeing that she, who had so much to fill her thoughts just then, might well have been excused if she had forgotten all about a queer, dreamy farm lad. For those were the days in which the long battle of the Aisne was developing, and although her brother Frank had thus far escaped death or wounds, bad news of him and others might come at any moment.

In Jan's thoughts there was not much room for the war and its vicissitudes. There would have been no room in them at all for Judith Combe if she had not enjoyed the proverbial privilege of living near the rose, which entailed the more dubious one of hearing the rose extolled without intermission during those Sunday walks which at an earlier period had been so largely taciturn. But Judith was a long-suffering little soul, and it was only after much hesitation that she ventured to ask:

'Bain't 'ee gettin' tu fond of her, Jan?'

Jan reddened all over his face and neck. 'Tu fond o' Miss Mildred! What be dramin' about then? Do 'ee think a dog can get tu fond o' the sun? You'm talkin' proper nonsense, Judy.'

Nevertheless, Judith's words came to him as a shock and a revelation, over which he pondered for hours afterwards. At first he was ashamed of his audacity and felt as if he had been guilty of some unpardonable outrage; but by degrees he arrived at a different view of the matter. What if he did love a human goddess? When all was said, he could not help it. The veriest cur, according to his own homely metaphor, may bask in the sun, and she could not be displeased by what would certainly never be revealed to her. It was his secret, which he was surely free to cherish, without the least shadow of hope, much as certain sixteenth-century poets cherished a passion for Queen Elizabeth, or said they did. But the fact of being without shadow of hope—as of course he was—

did not preclude indulgence in ecstatic visions. His mobile imagination enabled him to see himself earning literary renown (like the peasant Robert Burns, perhaps), rising by virtue of the same to a position of admitted equality with the highest in the land and stripping the laurels from his brow to lay them at Mildred's feet. Such things could not come to pass, and he knew that they could not; yet he liked to picture them and might plead that his fancies were as harmless as his love.

Harmless both may have been; only both contributed to bring about a return of his old restlessness. He was now embarrassed in conversing with Miss Mildred; he could not get rid of a haunting dread that she might suspect his sentiments (she was perhaps not so far from suspecting them as he thought), and then how would he ever dare to look her in the face again? More and more evident was it to him that he must leave the farm, that he would have to go some day and that he had better go soon. Added to this, his brothers were beginning to talk about donning khaki. Without saying anything to their father, they discussed the question amongst themselves and agreed that if 'th' old war' was going to last another year, as the newspapers said it was, they could not decently keep out of it. It was impossible for all of them to go, that was certain; but one, or even two, of them might. The youngest they excluded, not only because 'mother wouldn't niver part with 'un,' but because he was understood to have been cured of military hankerings. Thus it became plain that procrastination would only place fresh obstacles in Jan's path.

It was on a grey morning in October that he was accosted by a recruiting sergeant at Exeter, whither he had been sent to dispose of some steers, and there was no need to impress upon him that Flanders was the right place for a likely young chap without encumbrances. He intimated that that was his own view and asked whether he could have a couple of days 'to wind up like.' Three, if he chose, the pleased sergeant replied; but he said two would be enough. They might even be excessive, he thought, for although old Mrs. Issel was a fond mother, she had a 'tarrible power o' spache' when aggrieved; but he could not go off to the wars without taking leave of Miss Mildred, and he wanted to make sure of a farewell audience. More with that end in view than because he recognised any claim that Miss Mildred's maid might have upon him, he marched up to Culme House the same evening and briefly informed Judith that he had taken the King's shilling.

'Aw, ma dear soul!' cried the girl, throwing up her hands in dismay, 'what iver did 'ee du that vur?'

It was a thing, Jan answered, that had to be done—a thing that every young man in England would be doing before long, by what he had heard tell. He further attempted to explain why for him in particular it was essential to break fresh ground; but, not making much of a success of this and noticing, moreover, that Judith was not listening, he desisted.

Judith was crying softly, and that gave him a pain at his heart. His mother also, instead of scolding him, as he had expected her to do, had wept, throwing her apron over her head and rocking herself to and fro, while his father, after one short, angry outburst, had abruptly fallen silent and had walked out of the house with bowed shoulders. It is cruel to have to hurt people like that; but—what can one do? He did his best to comfort poor little Judy, who was afraid 'they pesky Germans' would kill him—which indeed did not seem unlikely—but who tried to recover a cheerful countenance and assured him that she understood everything. He could not, of course, believe that she did, and would have been quite sorry if she had; still he was grateful to her for being so brave about it and for readily promising to deliver a message to Miss Mildred.

He had thought—perhaps half hoped—that Miss Mildred would reproach him a little for having so suddenly taken a step from which he had been dissuaded by her; but when she met him on the morrow she did nothing of the kind. Circumstances alter cases; the country now needed all who were fit to serve; she assumed that Jan had been actuated by patriotic motives and had only praise and congratulations for him.

'How proud we shall all be of you if you come back with a V.C. or an officer's commission!' she exclaimed. 'Nothing is impossible in war time, you know.'

Jan smiled and shook his head, but he often thought of her words afterwards and made them the nucleus of innumerable day-dreams. What he longed for at the time was some hint of regret on her part, some intimation that she would miss him a little. However, she did not seem to think that there was anything to regret, and it was absurd to suppose that his departure could make any difference to her. Why should it? One thing, at any rate, she said which was as delightful as it was unforeseen.

'You must let me hear from you, John. Write often and at

great length, please, and tell me exactly how everything strikes you. Answer? Oh, of course I will, and I'll send you socks and mufflers and things, not to mention books.' She added, after a moment, 'I was thinking of giving you something now, only I don't know what you would like to have.'

Jan knew very well what he would like to have: whether he might dare to ask for it was another question. However, he was going away and it was probable enough that he would see her no more; so he screwed up courage to confess that the most welcome gift she could bestow upon him would be something that had belonged to herself—maybe the little silver pencil-case which he had so often seen her use.

She presented it to him with a bright smile and with no appearance of thinking him presumptuous. Then she frankly shook him by the hand, wished him the best of luck and left him beside the gate leading up to Bratton Farm, where their colloquy had been held. At the bend of the road she turned to wave him a last farewell and so disappeared into the misty twilight.

Jan raised the precious pencil-case to his lips, pushed it into his waistcoat pocket and was happy. He even told himself in so many words that he was happy; which is an experience of such rarity that those to whom it has once come never quite forget it. Jan thought that if he were to be shot the next week, he would still have had as good a moment as three score years and ten of life could bring him.

But of course there was no question of his being shot the next week or for a great many weeks to come. The training process through which he and other recruits had to go might have been tedious if he had not accepted it as an indispensable means towards an end, and if he had not, rather unexpectedly, found a certain pleasure in it. The monotony of drill was at least a novel species of monotony; his comrades were for the most part cheery, companionable fellows, many of whom differed sufficiently from the types hitherto known to him to stimulate his ever alert curiosity; the sergeant who instructed them in the use of the bayonet had semi-jocular anecdotes of his own experiences to relate which exhibited the grim visage of war as wreathed in smiles. Even the very real hardships and discomforts of camp life under persistent, pitiless rain were made light of by Jan, who felt himself developing into an efficient soldier day by day and who indeed was often singled out for commendation. He wrote regularly, if briefly, to the old

people at the farm, regretting that there was so little to say; yet he found plenty to say to Miss Mildred. Had she not bidden him to write 'at great length'? Those carefully composed epistles of his, which were couched in a queer mixture of dialect and high-flown language and in which words (culled from the works of some more competent manipulator of them) were occasionally used in a sense unrecognised by the dictionary, were not without pathos, as showing forth a poor mortal brimming over with ideas and impressions and struggling hard to be articulate. Let us hope that their recipient so interpreted them. Her replies, at any rate, laconic though they were, gave the utmost satisfaction to a worshipper who was duly sensible of her graciousness in deigning to reply at all.

What was not very satisfactory to Jan was that there was no talk of the battalion to which he belonged proceeding to the front. Some of the men professed to doubt whether they would ever leave the country; others had heard that they were to get marching orders in the coming summer; all were agreed that they would have to make the best of their sodden camp for several months yet. But no such trial of patience awaited Jan, who was despatched to France with a draft at very short notice early in February and who was not long left in his first halting-place some distance behind the fighting line. His impressions of life in the flooded trenches and of what it felt like to be under fire were given with great simplicity, though not without here and there a graphic touch, in the letters which he afterwards found time to write to Mildred. This war, he said, was not like any other war that he had ever heard or read of. It had had its glories, but it did not seem as if it was going to have any more. Your enemies were close at hand, but you couldn't get at them, nor yet they couldn't get at you. So, taken as a whole, it was not exciting. The worst part of it was the awful noise of the guns and the bursting shells, which he found more trying than the wet and cold and the ugly sights about which he was sure that his correspondent would not wish him to say much. The desolation of the ravaged country, the wrecked villages and farmhouses, the homeless peasants, the poor wandering dogs and cats—he dwelt on these and said that he seemed to be witnessing all the horrors and miseries of war without any of its grand spectacular effects. ('Where in the world did he get "spectacular effects" from?') Mildred smilingly wondered when she read this sentence.)

'And yet,' he went on, 'it's a singular thing that I never felt at

peace like I do now. I don't know as I can make you understand, Miss—I'm so bad at setting my meaning down—but it keeps coming over me that all's as it should be. Particular at nights, when the clouds blow away and I can look up at the stars. This planet we live on isn't but a very small speck, and we, scrambling about in our trenches, as it might be so many emmets, what matter how soon we're gone and forgotten? Years and centuries pass and everything is forgotten. So why worry? And then the chaps alongside of me. We don't talk except about common things, only I know they're feeling the same as I do, which draws us together like. Maybe it's because of death being always round the corner. Do you mind that poem of Kipling's, called *The Return*, in one of the books you lent me? It's wonderful true what he says—

“So much more near than I 'ad known,
So much more great than I 'ad guessed—
And me, like all the rest, alone—
But reachin' out to all the rest!”

That's just the way it strikes me, and somehow it seems to make for peace, though I couldn't say why.'

If Jan had probed and analysed the serenity of spirit which he strove to define, he might have discovered that it arose simply from a sense that he was doing his duty; but he never quite arrived at that conclusion. What he did conclude—and found humorously puzzling—was that the place into which he had dropped was the right place for him, that he must always have been meant to be a soldier, not a poet nor an imaginative writer nor any of the fine things that he would have liked to be, but just a private in an infantry regiment. Well, even so, ambition need not be banished, and his chance of earning what Miss Mildred had said would make her proud might come any day.

He did, as the weeks slipped on, obtain sundry occasions of proving himself a capable fighter; but the affairs in which he was concerned were not important enough for public record. Save for these sporadic attacks upon the enemy, which for the most part resulted only in the loss of a considerable number of lives, there was no break in the regular routine of so many days in the trenches, followed by a period of rest in billets, whence he despatched his letters, writing them invariably with the pencil which was his most treasured possession.

It was on a cold, frosty night in spring that two staff officers,

passing along his trench, halted beside him, and one of them called out :

'Hullo !—hanged if it isn't John Issel ! Well, Jan, 'tis a wisht poor job sodgerin', sure enough. Bain't it now ?'

Jan, standing at the salute, had a broad smile for the handsome young fellow who accosted him in the dialect of which he had lately been endeavouring to rid himself. He did not know much of Captain Haseldine, but he was proud and pleased to be recognised, and he made reply that he had nothing to complain about. Campaigning, he added, was teaching him a lot of new things.

'Oh, it's doing that for most of us,' Frank Haseldine observed, laughing. 'Even for some of our Generals.'

He went on talking for a few minutes about home affairs, remarking in an explanatory parenthesis to his companion, 'Issel comes from our parish.' Then he said to Jan 'You'll see Captain Bernard again one of these days, I hope, if we all pull through. Captain Bernard is engaged to be married to my sister Mildred.'

It was a little like being hit by a bullet—a sudden thump which made your heart stand still, yet left you erect and with an instant feeling that your first duty was to show no sign of distress. Jan showed none, and presently the two officers moved on, leaving him free to think what he would beneath his friends the blinking stars. These gave him such comfort as they had it in their power to bestow. They said it did not matter, because nothing really matters, and to that view in the abstract he could assent. But to affirm that so long as his little life might last it would not matter that somebody—he had scarcely looked at the man—was going to marry his goddess was quite vain. If the stars had asked whether he had ever imagined that he himself could marry Miss Mildred, he would naturally have answered 'Of course not'; yet, however ridiculous and insane it might be, the truth was that he could not bear the idea of her belonging to anybody else. So what it came to, and what it had doubtless been bound to come to from the outset, was that he could not bear conditions which were altogether right, reasonable and inevitable. Jan Issel was not the first to find himself in that forlorn plight. In extreme cases it has been known to lead to suicide; in the vast majority it entails submission, more or less facile, to the decrees of destiny; for Jan it translated itself into a very fervent and genuine hope that the Germans might wipe him out. He saw now—it may have been illogical, but that made no difference to the fact—that his visions had been utterly childish,

that he, an uneducated yokel, had no future and could have none, that it would be far better for him to end out there in Flanders than to be confronted some day with the dire prospect of a return to tilling the Devon fields and herding the Devon cattle.

This mood, it is true, did not endure; for he became hazily conscious that there was something contemptible in it and that a young, strong man has no business to wish himself extinguished. Nevertheless, he had more difficulty than usual in composing his next letter to Mildred, in which he made no allusion to her engagement, thinking that it would be bad manners to do so, since she had not mentioned it to him. At the end he remarked:

'We lose men most days, and maybe my turn will come. It is good to be alive, because the world is beautiful and wonderful and because of some of the people in it; but I don't think there can be many so happy that they should mind dying, for I can't believe but what death means rest.'

With such persuasions he was well prepared to face what was in store for him when at length his battalion was told off to join in an engagement on a large scale. They knew very little about it beyond the fact that the British forces, after a rather prolonged spell of inaction, were about to resume the offensive and that their own special job would be to take a position facing them which was said to have been mined. That it had been mined with success was evidenced towards evening by a series of terrific explosions which seemed simply to annihilate the enemy's defensive works; but the infantry were held back until a deluge of shell had been poured into the ruins. Then Jan and his comrades got the order to go, and away they went through the twilight smoke and dust, meeting with no opposition from the apparently broken foe. The distance that separated them from the first line of hostile trenches was traversed in no time, and that first line, or what remained of it, was occupied with ease; but in the communication trenches the Germans made a stand which resulted in hand-to-hand fighting of a really desperate nature. Of what was taking place amidst that tumult and welter and in the falling dusk Jan had only a confused notion; he supposed he must be performing his share of the task all right, because somebody sang out, 'Well done, Issel!' He was aware of being wounded, for the warm blood was trickling down his leg and soaking through his putties; but he felt neither pain nor weakness. Finally there came an abrupt lull. The bearded, grey-coated Germans had vanished, and he realised that

the next line of trenches had been carried. He realised also, for the second time in his life, that he was quite happy. When he fell in, forming up with the remnants of his shattered battalion, he heard himself laughing aloud in sheer glee—he was as happy as that!

Was it a victory? It seemed so; yet a sudden and violent fusillade, opening upon them from their left, caused him to glance interrogatively at his neighbour. The man answered his unspoken query with a muttered 'Enfiladed, by God!' and immediately afterwards fell forward, groaning and swearing. But no groan came from Jan Issel, whom a bullet struck full in the heart; so that he dropped and never stirred again—only one amongst thousands who were delivered that night from the complications and bewilderments of a sick world.

To fall fighting for England in the full tide of life, to fall, shot through the heart, without a pang and in a moment of supreme exaltation is to finish gloriously, enviably. We all know this and we all say it, though some of us perhaps may feel that our own hearts are none the less broken for that. However, it was not to be expected that Mildred Haseldine should be broken-hearted when the news came to Culme House. She was much distressed; still she could not but recognise that there were compensating circumstances, and she went over at once to Bratton Farm to impart some of these to the poor lad's parents. If her condolences were not received in quite as grateful a spirit as they might have been, she could and did make allowances for the grief-stricken farmer and his wife. Old Issel scarcely listened to what she was saying, and cut her short by calling out in a loud, harsh voice:

'What did 'a want to go and get hisself killed vur? Darn they foul Germans! Yes, Miss, I don't doubt but you'm sorry, but it bain't your sorrow as'll bring my boy back.'

With that he stumped out of the kitchen, leaving Mildred to do what she could with Mrs. Issel, which was an even more difficult matter. For Mrs. Issel, dry-eyed and despairing, had some rather unkind and irrational things to say. When, for instance, she was gently told that her visitor had strong personal reasons for sympathising with all to whom the war was bringing anxiety or loss, it was not very generous to rejoin that the young lady need not fret. 'They staff officers don't niver take no hurt, so I've heerd tell.' But what was really too unjust to be endured without protest was the assertion that it was Miss Mildred more than any-

body who had driven Jan away to distant battlefields by 'putting a passel of foolish notions into his head.' In self-defence, Mildred had to remind the old woman that, so far from having encouraged Jan to enlist, she had tried, by providing him with other interests, to deter him from so doing. As for his actual enlistment, she had only heard of it after it had become an accomplished fact. This being undeniably true, Mrs. Issel made no reply and remained silent while it was represented to her that we can never be sure whether an early death is a misfortune or not. No living being can hope to escape sorrow and suffering, and Mildred, for her part, did not think that poor Jan's temperament was of the kind that tends towards happiness.

Probably that also was true. It would hardly have made Jan happy to discover—as he might have done—that he had mistaken an entirely commonplace young woman for a divinity nor to realise—as he must have done—that he was too heavily weighted in life's handicap to emerge from the ruck where he was so ill at ease. Judith Combe, while brushing her mistress's hair that evening, said of him with unexpected sagacity that maybe Providence had 'served him kind' by taking him out of this world, seeing that he would always have been set upon what was beyond his reach.

Judith herself was so set upon obtaining something for which she was more than a little afraid to ask that she decided to take the risk of making her desire known. Could Miss Mildred spare one of Jan's letters? He had not written to her at all, and she would like very much, if she might, to have a page or two from his own hand. 'Because we was in a manner friends, you see, Miss.'

Mildred looked inquiringly at her sedate handmaid and smiled. 'I am not sure that it would be quite fair to the poor boy,' she answered. 'He says some things which many people would think rather comic, and perhaps I oughtn't. . . . However, you wouldn't understand. Oh, well, yes, Judith—take them all, if you care to have them. I think I can find the whole collection.'

So the whole collection became the property of Judith, who spent many an hour over it and stained some of its leaves with her tears. It is by no means certain that she did not understand Jan's flights of fancy and diction. It may even have constituted one of the unnumbered ironies of human experience that Jan himself should have been more nearly understood by the illiterate Judith than by Mildred Haseldine or by anybody else.

W. E. NORRIS.

THE NEW 'UBIQUE': A BATTLE.

BY JEFFERY E. JEFFERY.

By the ears and the eyes and the brain,
By the limbs and the hands and the wings,
We are slaves to our masters the guns,
But their slaves are the masters of kings!

GILBERT FRANKAU.

SOMEWHERE about the middle of June, we knew definitely that we were 'for it,' as the soldier says; we knew that our division was one of those chosen for the great concentration which was to culminate in the 'great push'—and we were proud of the distinction. A three days' march brought us to a certain training area, where we camped for a week and worked some seventeen hours a day—counting, that is, from *réveillé* at 4 A.M. until the last bit of harness was hung up clean and ready for the morrow at 9 P.M.

During this period two incidents of note occurred. One was that the Child suddenly developed pleurisy, and was removed to hospital—a serious loss at any time, but especially so at this particular moment. The other was that a squadron of hostile aircraft flew over our manœuvre ground and actually dropped a bomb within 150 yards of the tail of our column. Which, seeing that we were some twenty miles from the nearest part of the line and at the moment only playing at soldiers, was most disconcerting.

From the time when we left this training area until, about three weeks later, we were withdrawn to rest in a quiet part of the line, I kept a rough diary of our particular share in the greatest battle ever fought by the British Army. The following are some extracts from it, in no way embellished, but only enlarged so as to make them intelligible.

June 27.—Nine-hour night march southwards, arriving in comfortable billets at 3.30 A.M. Aeroplanes (or at any rate, hostile ones) are the curse of this war: if it was not for fear of them we could move by daylight in a reasonable manner. The old saddler, dozing on a wagon, fell off and was run over: nothing broken, but he will be lost to us. A great pity, as he's a charming character and a first-class workman.

June 28 and 29.—Rested, the continuation of the march having been postponed.

June 30.—Orders to move on to-night. Was sent off with a small party on a road and river reconnaissance: this presumably with a view to going forward 'when the advance begins.' By the time we got back to where the brigade was to billet, had ridden about forty miles. Job only half finished. Battery marched in at midnight.

July 1.—Started at 5.30 A.M. with same party to finish reconnaissance. Reached a point about four miles behind the line, at 7.15 A.M.: a tremendous bombardment in progress. Left our horses, and walked on two miles to a river. Here learnt that the attack had been launched at 7.30 and was going well. Walked north up the river-bank, keeping well under the shelter of the steep ridge on the east side, and only emerging to examine each bridge as we came to it. Thousands upon thousands of shells of every size, from 'Grannies' to 18-prs., passing over our heads unceasingly: expected the enemy to retaliate. But not a round came: probably the Boche was too busily engaged elsewhere. Met streams of wounded coming down; some with captured helmets, nearly all with grins.

Finished the river reconnaissance about 10.30 and walked back by a roundabout (but less unpleasant!) way, and reached our horses about midday. Rode back to the battery and spent the afternoon writing out full report. Orders to move at 11.30 P.M. Long night march to new billets, arriving 4.15 A.M.

July 2.—Rested. In the course of the day the Child returned, having in some amazing way persuaded the hospital authorities that pleurisy and a temperature of 104° are the best possible things to have on the eve of a great offensive. Swears he's all right now, and objects to being ordered to take it easy—while he can. Heavy bombardment all day, but we are eight miles back here. Official communiqués record further successes.

July 3.—Moved at 9.30 P.M., and arrived (5.30 A.M.) soaking wet at the worst bivouac it has ever been our unhappy lot to occupy.

July 4.—Saw about 150 German prisoners being brought back. In the afternoon, after a violent thunderstorm, went to look at the position which we are to take over. Found that it was immensely strong. Originally it was only 1200 yards from the enemy front line, but now, since the advance, is about 3000. Steady rain all the time. Got back to find the camp converted into a veritable bog, and men of all the batteries making shelters

for themselves by cutting down trees and looting straw. There will be a row over this, but—well, it is too much to expect men to submit to such *unnecessary* discomfort.

July 5.—Took the Child and two telephonists and went up to new position. Bombardment proceeding incessantly. Was amazed at the amount of material already brought up, at the gangs already working on the shell-wrecked roads, and at the crowd of spectators who lined a convenient ridge to 'watch the show.'

Went with the Child and the battery commander from whom we were taking over to get a look at the country and visit the O.P. Passed through Fricourt—not long captured. Never could a bombardment have done its work of destruction more thoroughly than here. Not figuratively, but literally; no one brick stood upon another, scarcely one brick was whole. Walked on up the sunken road that leads north from Fricourt past the Dingle and Shelter Wood. For days this road had been a death-trap. It was strewn with corpses, with stretchers on which lay wounded men awaiting removal, with broken bits of equipment, English and German—and it stank. We arrived at the headquarters of a battalion and asked if we could see the colonel.

'No,' they told us, 'you can't at present. He's just been buried in his dug-out by a shell, and it will be some time before we get him clear; he's all right, but a bit shaken.'

So we went on up a battered trench to the O.P. In it a subaltern and two signallers, all three caked in mud. At the moment the wire to the battery was intact. Two men had been killed and one wounded whilst mending it. From here we could see the famous Quadrangle Trench, which at that time was holding up the advance. Many batteries were shooting at it. Having got our bearings, so to speak, we did not linger in this most unhealthy spot, but returned to the battery position.

On the way home met our own colonel bearing the news that the brigade would probably go into action in quite a different area. This news confirmed at H.Q. at 5 P.M. Turned back and reconnoitred the new position, which was farther south, nearer Fricourt; rather cramped and quite unprepared for occupation. Cadged dinner from an old friend whom we met at D.H.Q. Met the battery on the road about 10 P.M. and led it to new position. Work of getting guns in, ammunition and stores dumped, and teams away completed by 3 A.M. Awaited dawn.

July 6.—As soon as it was light went up the hill on the right front of the battery to meet the colonel, choose an O.P. and 'learn'

the country. The scene of wreckage upon this hill now is past all belief, and is, I should imagine, a perfect example of the havoc wrought by a modern 'intense' bombardment. The whole face of the earth is completely altered. On the German side of No Man's Land, not one square yard of the original surface of the ground remains unbroken. Line upon line of trenches and tunnels and saps have been so smashed that they are barely recognisable as such: there are mine craters seventy to a hundred yards across, and there are dug-outs (some of these still intact) which go down fifty feet and more into the chalk. On every side is débris—rails, timber, kit, blankets, broken rifles, bread, steel helmets, pumps, respirators, corpses. And nowhere can one get away from the sickening smell—the smell of putrescent human flesh. . . .

The morning mist cleared at last and we were able to see the landscape. From the O.P. we chose, the view, for our purposes, was ideal. Below us lay the ruins that once were Fricourt, to the right Fricourt Wood, farther off Mametz Wood and village, and on the skyline Contalmaison. Returned, very dishevelled, to breakfast at 8 A.M. During the morning ran out a wire, got 'through' to the battery, but did not dare to start shooting until further information as to the situation of the infantry was available. Eventually gathered that we only hold the southern edge of Mametz Wood, and that the Quadrangle Trench which lies to the left (west) of it is not yet in our possession. Spent the afternoon registering the guns, and then began shelling Mametz Wood. Was relieved by the Child at tea-time. Came down to the battery and washed. Looked forward to decent night's rest but was disappointed, viz.:

July 7.—Woken by Angelo at 1 A.M., who brought orders for a 'strafe,' which was to start at 2. Battery fired at a rapid rate from that hour till 2.30. Went back to bed. Woken by the Infant, who had relieved Angelo, at 6. Big bombardment to start at 7.20. Went to telephone dug-out at 7.15, unwashed and half-dressed, and remained there all day; meals brought in to me. The battery fired practically continuously for fourteen hours at rates varying from one to twenty-four rounds a minute. Targets various—mostly 'barraging' Mametz Wood and ground immediately to the west of it. Worked the detachments as far as possible in reliefs, turning on spare signallers, cooks, and servants to carry ammunition as it arrived.

The Child, who was at the O.P., sent down what information he could, but reported that it was hardly possible to see anything

owing to the smoke. Passed on everything to Brigade H.Q. (communications working well), and received their instructions as to changes of target, rate of fire, etc. By dusk we were all very tired, and several of the men stone deaf. There were several heavy showers during the day, so that the position became a quagmire into which the guns sank almost to their axles and became increasingly difficult to serve. Empty cartridge cases piled several feet high round each platform: mud awful. No official communiqué as to result of the day's operation. Got eight hours' sleep.

July 8.—Shooting, off and on, all day—mostly registration of new points. In the intervals when not firing the detachments kept hard at work improving and strengthening the position. Hostile artillery much more active, but nothing really close to us. Fired 150 rounds during the night into Mametz Wood: northern portion not yet in our hands.

July 9.—A good deal of barrage work all day, but as it was mostly at a slow rate the men managed to get some rest—goodness knows, they both need and deserve it.

July 10.—Went out with the colonel to reconnoitre an advanced position. Got caught in a barrage, and had to crouch in a (fortunately) deep trench for half an hour. Sitting there began to wonder if this was the prelude to a counter-attack; just then, looking out to the left, that is towards the south-west corner of Mametz Wood, saw a lot of men running hard. Suddenly spotted the familiar grey uniform and spiked helmets of the enemy.

'God!' I cried, 'it is a counter-attack. Those are *Huns*!' Expected every moment to have one peering in over the top of the trench: did not dare to run for it, owing to the barrage, which was still heavy. T——, who was with me, remained calm and put up his glasses.

'All right,' he said; 'they're prisoners. Look at the escort.'

And so they were, running for their lives through their own shrapnel—and the escort keeping well up with them!

The storm being over (no 'hate' lasts for ever), returned as quickly as we could, and reported that the position was possible but by no means tempting! A lot of night firing.

July 11.—Set out with the Child, two sergeants, and my trusty 'look-out man' to look for a more favourable spot. After a good deal of walking about found one, a fairly snug place (though pitted with shell holes).

Intended to reconnoitre for an O.P. in the front edge of Mametz

Wood, but met a colonel just back from those parts who assured us that the enemy front line ran there. Reluctantly (!) we abandoned the enterprise and returned. At 6 P.M. the Child started off with a digging party to prepare the new position. Move of the battery ordered for 9.30, then postponed till 10.30. Road crowded with infantry and transport; progress slow. To be mounted and at the head of a column of twelve six-horse teams is a very different thing from being alone and ready to slip behind a wall or into a trench if occasion calls for it. Luck was on our side, however, and we got through before any shells came.

Occupied the position quickly, emptied the ammunition wagons, and got the horses clear without casualties. The Child reported that a few four-twos had come pretty close while he and his party were digging and had stopped their work for a while: nevertheless, quite a lot already done. Time now 12.30. Turned on every available man and continued digging till dawn. Men very beat, but not a word of grouching.

July 12.—At dawn went up to find a new O.P.: took the Child and two signallers, the latter laying a wire as they went. Found excellent place with good general view in an old German redoubt. Trenches, however, crammed with sleeping infantry, over whom one had to step, and under whom the signallers had to pass their line! Thick mist till 8 A.M., when light became good enough to start on our task, which was to cut through the wire at a certain spot in the German main second line north of Mametz Wood. Observation difficult, as we were rather far back and the whole line was being heavily bombarded by our 'heavies.' About 10.30 what was apparently an excursion party of generals and staff officers arrived to see the fun, crowded us out of our bay in the trench and lined up, with their heads and red hat-bands exposed. Lay down in a corner and tried to sleep, but got trodden on so abandoned the idea. Shoon (another of my youthful subalterns) came up to relieve us at 2.30, so the Child and I returned to the battery and got about three hours' sleep. The detachments with amazing industry and endurance again hard at work digging. A good deal of hostile fire all round us, especially close to the nullah, but nothing within 200 yards of the guns.

About 5.30 P.M. Shoon rang up from the O.P. to say that he and a signaller had been wounded. Angelo went up to take his place. Poor old Shoon, when he arrived down, was pretty shaken. Evidently the crowd of spectators previously remarked upon had

attracted the attention of some cross Boche gunner. A five-nine dropped just beside the O.P. and knocked both signallers and Shoon, who was observing his wire-cutting at the moment, head over heels back into the trench below. While they were picking themselves up out of the débris a salvo landed on the parados immediately behind them. One signaller was untouched (and rescued his precious telephone), the other was badly cut about the head and leg and departed on a stretcher—a good man too. Shoon got a scratch on his forehead and some splinters into his left arm. Swore he was all right, but since he didn't look it was ordered to bed.

Ammunition replenished in the evening in a tearing hurry. It is not pleasant to have teams standing about in a place like this. Heard that on the return journey to the wagon line last night a bombardier, four drivers, and five horses had been wounded—all slightly, thank Heaven!

Shot all night at the wood (Bazentin-le-petit), and at the front line.

July 13.—Continued wire-cutting and searching the wood all day. Scores of batteries doing the same thing, and noise infernal. The Child went off to find out if he could see the wire from the front edge of Mametz Wood (which now really *is* in our possession). Failing to see it from there, he wandered on up an old communication trench known as Middle Alley, which led direct from our own to the German front line. Eventually he found a place from which he could see through a gap in the hedge. The wire was cut all right—and, incidentally, he might have come face to face with a hostile bombing party at any moment! But what seemed to interest him much more was the behaviour of the orderly who had accompanied him. This N.C.O., who is the battery 'look-out man,' specially trained to observe anything and everything, raised himself from the ground a moment after they had both hurled themselves flat to await the arrival of a five-nine in Mametz Wood, peered over a fallen tree-trunk and said, '*That one, sir, was just in front, but slightly to the left*'!

Spent the afternoon preparing detailed orders and time-tables for to-morrow's 'big show.' Slept from 11 till 2.45 A.M.

July 14.—The 'intense' bombardment began at 3.20 A.M.; the infantry attack was launched five minutes later. Even to attempt to describe this bombardment is beyond me. All that can be said is that there was such a *hell* of noise that it was quite

impossible to give any orders to the guns except by sending subalterns from the telephone dug-out to shout in the ear of each sergeant in turn. The battery (in company with perhaps a hundred others) barraged steadily, 'lifting' fifty yards at a time from 3.25 till 7.15 A.M., by which time some 900 rounds had been expended and the paint on the guns was blistering from their heat. We gathered (chiefly from information supplied by the Child at the O.P., who got into touch with various staff and signal officers) that the attack had been very successful. About 7.30 things slowed down a little and the men were able to get breakfast and some rest—half at a time, of course.

At midday cavalry moved up past us and affairs began to look really promising. Slept from 3 to 5 P.M., then got orders to reconnoitre an advanced position in front of Acid Drop Copse. (It may here be noted that from our first position this very copse was one of our most important targets at a range of nearly 4000 yards.) Chose a position, but could see that if and when we do occupy it, it is not going to be a health-resort. And, owing to the appalling state of the ground, it will take some driving to get there. Had a really good night's rest for once. Battery fired at intervals all night.

July 15.—Attack continued. By 10.30 A.M. our guns had reached extreme range and we were forced to stop. (We started at 2700 in this position.) News very good: enemy much demoralised and surrendering freely. Practically no hostile shelling round us now—in fact, we are rather out of the battle for the moment. After lunch formed up the whole battery and thanked the men for the splendid way that they had worked. Shoon, whose arm has got worse, sent under protest to hospital. Desperately sorry to lose him.

In the afternoon switched to the left, where we are apparently still held up, and fired occasional salvos on Martinpuich. Ditto all night.

July 16.—Everybody much concerned over a certain Switch Trench, which appears to be giving much trouble. Fired spasmodically (by map) on this trench throughout the day. In the evening all guns removed to a travelling Ordnance Workshop for overhaul—they need it. Late at night received orders to dig the Acid Drop Copse position next day, and occupy it as soon as the guns are sent back.

July 17.—Took all officers and practically every man up to new

position at 7 A.M. and started to dig. Shells all round us while we worked, but still no damage. This is too good to last. In the afternoon went out with George (another B.C.¹ in the brigade), the Child, and a telephonist to look for an O.P. whence to see this infernal Switch Trench. After a while parted from George, whom we last saw walking *forward* from the villa, pausing occasionally to examine the country through his glasses. We learnt afterwards that he spent a really happy afternoon in No Man's Land carrying various wounded infantrymen into comparative safety! For which he has been duly recommended.

Got into the old German second line (taken on the 14th), and found that it had been so completely battered by our bombardment that its captors had been obliged to dig an entirely new trench in front of it. This part of the world was full of gunner officers *all* looking for an O.P. for Switch Trench. Returned to Acid Drop Copse about 5 P.M. and found that the digging had progressed well. Marched the men back to the old position, where they got tea and a rest. Teams came up about 8. Packed up and moved forward. Ground so desperately heavy that it became necessary to put ten horses in a team for the last pull up the hill to the position. Got all guns into action and twenty-one wagon loads of ammunition dumped by 11 P.M.—no casualties. Work of the men, who were much worn out, beyond all praise.

The noise in this place is worse than anything previously experienced. Being, as we are now, the most advanced battery in this particular sector, we get the full benefit of every gun that is behind us—and there are many. Moreover, the hostile artillery is extremely active, especially in the wood, where every shell comes down with a hissing rush that ends in an appalling crash. About midnight the Boche began to put over small 'stink' shells. These seemed to flit through the air, and always landed with a soft-sounding 'phutt' very like a dud. One burst just behind our trench and wounded a gunner in the foot. Found it impossible to sleep, owing to the din.

July 18.—At 4 A.M. the hostile bombardment seemed so intense that, fearing a counter-attack, I got up to look round. Was reassured by Angelo, who had already done so. Beyond the fact that the wood was being systematically searched with five-nines, there was nothing much doing. Returned to bed, but still failed to sleep.

¹ Battery Commander.

Fired at intervals throughout the day at various spots allotted by Brigade H.Q. Having no O.P. had to do everything from the map. Men all digging when not actually firing: position now nearly splinter-proof. A most unnerving day, however. A Hun barrage of 'air-crumps' on the ridge in front of us by the Cutting, another one to our right along the edge of the wood, many five-nines over our heads into the dip behind us, and quite a few into Acid Drop Copse on our left rear.

In the afternoon we had half a dozen H.E. 'pip-squeaks' very close at a moment when there were three wagons up replenishing ammunition. One burst within four yards of the lead horses—and no damage. This *cannot* last. Orders for a big attack received at 4 P.M. At 5 counter-orders to the effect that we are to be relieved to-night. Fired continuously till about 8.30, then packed up and waited for the teams, which arrived about 9.

We were just congratulating ourselves on our luck, it being then rather a quiet moment and three out of the four teams already on the move, when a big 'air-crump' burst straight above our heads, wounding the sergeant-major in the thigh. Put him up on the last limber and sent the guns off as fast as they could go—ground too bad to gallop. Two more shells followed us down the valley, but there were no further casualties. At the bottom missed the Child: sent to inquire if he was at the head of the column—no. Was beginning to get nervous, when he strolled up from the rear, accompanied by the officers'-mess cook.

'Pity to leave these behind,' he observed, throwing down a kettle and a saucepan!

Nervy work loading up our stores and kits on to the G.S. wagon, but the enemy battery had returned to its favourite spot by the Cutting, and nothing further worried us. Marched back to the wagon line (about five miles). Much amused by the tenacity with which one of the sergeants clung to a jar of rum which he had rescued from the position.¹ At the wagon line collected the whole battery together, and while waiting went across to see the sergeant-major in the dressing-station. Am afraid, though it is nothing serious, that it will be a case of 'Blighty' for him. A very serious loss to the battery, as he has been absolutely invaluable throughout this show.

Marched to our old bivouac at the swampy wood, but were allotted a reasonable space outside it this time. Fell into bed, beat to the world, at 3.30 A.M.

¹ This jar was afterwards found to contain lime-juice!

July 19.—Much to do, though men and horses are tired to death. Moved off at 6 P.M. and did a twenty-mile night march, arriving at another bivouac at 2 A.M. Horses just about at their last gasp. Poor old things, they have been in harness almost continuously throughout the battle bringing up load after load of ammunition at all hours of the day and night.

July 20.—Took over a new position (trench warfare style) just out of the battle area as now constituted, and settled down to—rest.

The above is an accurate, though, I fear, far too personal, record of the doings of one particular unit during a fortnight's continuous fighting. It is in no way an attempt to describe a battle as a whole. That is a feat beyond my powers—and, I think, beyond the powers of anyone actually engaged. Thinking things over now in the quiet of a well-made dug-out, I realise that the predominant impressions left upon my mind, in ascending order of magnitude so to speak, are: dirt, stink, horrors, lack of sleep, funk—and the amazing endurance of the men. In the first article of this series I wrote: 'But this I know now—the human material with which I have to deal is good enough.' It is. I grant that our casualties were slight (though in this respect we were extremely lucky), and that compared with the infantry our task was the easier one of 'standing the strain' rather than of 'facing the music.' But still think of the strain on the detachments, serving their guns night and day almost incessantly for fourteen days on end. In the first week alone we fired the amount of ammunition which suffices for a battery in peace time for thirty years! They averaged five hours' sleep in the twenty-four, these men, throughout the time; and they dug three separate positions—all in heavy ground. Nor must one forget the drivers, employed throughout in bringing up ammunition along roads pitted with holes, often shelled and constantly blocked with traffic.

The New Ubique begins to be worthy of the Old.

THE BICENTENARY OF GRAY.

BORN DECEMBER 26, 1716:

BY THE DEAN OF NORWICH.

It is a mere chance, but none the less suggestive, that Shakespeare's commemoration this year should be followed by that of Gray. Shakespeare, of course, would cut up into many poets, but one of them would have been not unlike Gray; a man of a fastidious and somewhat melancholy temper but with a rare affectionateness, and a sincere love of his kind, which mingled with his critical faculty to produce a fresh and very delightful humour. However this may be, the lesser poet was drawn to the greater by a sure instinct from school-days. In a letter to Horace Walpole, written when he was just eighteen, he finds it natural to disguise his boyish affection in terms borrowed from Mrs. Quickly: 'I have born and born, and been fub'd off and fub'd off,' &c.; and he does so again later: 'If I don't hear from you this week, I shall be in a thousand Tyrrits and Frights about you.' To his more literary friend, Richard West, another member of the 'Quadruple Alliance,' whose early death he was to mourn in the most exquisite of elegies, he writes with enthusiasm about Shakespeare's language.

'Every word in him is a picture. Pray put me the following lines into the tongue of our modern Dramatics:

"But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass:
I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph:
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up"—

and what follows. To me they appear untranslatable; and if this be the case our language is greatly degenerated.'

'Every word in him is a picture.' He said the same thing in a fine quatrain of the poem to Richard Bentley, contrasting the great

masters of old with the poets of his own day, especially with himself, whose poems Bentley was illustrating :

'But not to one in this benighted age
Is that diviner inspiration giv'n
That burns in Shakespeare's or in Milton's page,
The pomp and prodigality of heaven.'

In another letter to West of the same year he defends the practice of 'judiciously and sparingly' inserting phrases from Shakespeare into modern poetry because of their greater energy ; a practice which he himself was to adopt in his later odes. Gray's Shakespearian borrowings are always judicious, but it may be questioned whether the effect of such quotations from a greater writer by a less is not to create an impression of poverty in the borrower. It is more important to inquire how far Gray was successful in emulating the Shakespearian 'pomp and prodigality' of imagination. The prodigality clearly was beyond even his ambition. His Pegasus always required the spur rather than the reins. But the pomp, it must be admitted, he did not infrequently achieve. No one can be blind to the magnificence of the lines about Pindar in the 'Progress of Poesy' :

'Oh ! Lyre divine, what daring Spirit
Wakes thee now ? Tho' he inherit
Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,
That the Theban eagle bear
Sailing with supreme dominion
Thro' the azure deep of air.'

And in the 'Elegy' we have many imaginative pictures that have the true Shakespearian quality :

'The paths of glory lead but to the grave.'
'And shut the gates of Mercy on mankind.'
'Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death.'
'Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.'
'Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, ling'ring look behind.'
'Even in our Ashes live their wonted Fires.'

It will be remembered that in the 'Progress of Poesy' English poetry is represented by three names—Shakespeare, Milton, and Dryden. Dryden is praised for the energy of his heroic couplet, symbolised by the

'Two coursers of ethereal race
With necks in thunder cloath'd and long-resounding pace,'

who draw his car, and also for his one great lyrical achievement, the Ode on St. Cecilia's day. Gray's admiration for Shakespeare and Milton as models was tempered by his recognition of what Dryden had done for the English language, in rendering it more 'refined and free.' To Beattie he wrote, 'Remember Dryden and be blind to all his faults,' and he told him in an interview (according to Mason) that 'if there was any excellence in his own numbers he had learned it wholly from that great poet; and pressed him with great earnestness to study him, as his choice of words and versification were singularly happy and harmonious.' If Dryden's 'Alexander's Feast' be compared with the 'Progress of Poesy' we can see how successfully Gray has blended the qualities he most admired in his several masters. From Dryden he has caught the smoothness and strength of his line; but Gray's rhythm owes more to 'L'Allegro' and 'Comus' than to the commonplace movement of Dryden's ode; while the imaginative beauty of its many pictures was part of his debt to the greatest of them all. There is one other great English poet to whom Gray was ready to acknowledge a debt. He told Norton Nicholls that he never sat down to compose poetry without reading Spenser for a considerable time previously. I do not remember that Gray ever incorporates a Spenserian phrase in his own verse; his instinct would have told him that the two styles would not agree. But his instinct would also tell him that to bathe himself in Spenser before entering the temple of his Muse was a sure way of freeing himself from any pollution of mind or spirit.

The 'Elegy written in a Country Churchyard' was composed at intervals between 1746 and 1750, and sent to Walpole in June of that year. Walpole showed it to many friends and in some way it got into the hands of a publisher, who wrote to Gray announcing his intention of printing it, and begging his 'indulgence.' Gray wrote at once to Walpole desiring him to let Dodsley print it without delay from his copy, and it accordingly appeared in February 16, 1751, in a quarto pamphlet, priced sixpence, and entitled 'An Elegy wrote in a Country Church Yard.' The fashionable solecism must

be attributed to Walpole, who saw the poem through the press, and prefixed this short 'advertisement' :

'The following Poem came into my hands by Accident, if the general Approbation with which this little Piece has spread, may be call'd by so slight a Term as Accident. It is this Approbation which makes it unnecessary for me to make any Apology but to the Author : As he cannot but feel some Satisfaction in having pleas'd so many Readers already, I flatter myself he will forgive my communicating that Pleasure to many more. The Editor.'

In his letter thanking Walpole for his 'paternal care' of the poem Gray speaks of the advertisement as 'saving his honour' ; which can only mean that he thought the poem unworthy of being offered to the public by its author. That this was not a mere affectation is shown by his annoyance at its instant popularity, which he thought to be due to its subject. He said it would have been equally popular if written in prose. He writes to his friend Dr. Wharton, after speaking of 'A Long Story,' which had been 'shew'd about in Town, and not liked at all' :

'On the other hand the Stanzas have had the Misfortune by Mr. W.'s fault to be made still more publick, for w^{ch} they certainly were never meant, but is too late to complain. They have been so applauded, it is quite a Shame to repeat it. I mean not to be modest ; but I mean it is a Shame for those, who have said such superlative Things about them, that I can't repeat them.'

Gray's modesty was still further tried in the autumn of the same year by Walpole's insistence that he should allow his still unpublished odes, on Spring, on Eton College, and on Walpole's cat, with whatever else he had to furnish a volume, to appear with illustrations by Walpole's *protégé*, Richard Bentley, a son of the great Master of Trinity. The negotiations, so far as we have them in Gray's correspondence, are diverting. Gray discovered that it was in contemplation to prefix his own portrait ; this he forbade, though it was already half engraved. He objected to the proposed title and insisted that it should be 'Designs by Mr. R. Bentley for six poems of Mr. T. Gray,' on the ground that 'the verses were only subordinate and explanatory to the Drawings and suffered to come out thus only for that reason.' Lastly, he objected to Dodsley's proposal to omit the 'Mr.' before the names of the poet and artist, as being 'an uncommon sort of simplicity that looks like affectation.' This modesty may have been excessive,

but it is not ridiculous when we reflect that Gray had not yet produced his finest work, and knew that he had it in him to write something more worthy of himself and English poetry than the occasional pieces which Walpole wished to publish, or even than the deservedly popular *Elegy*.

In 1757 Walpole issued, as the first book from his new printing-press at Strawberry Hill, a quarto pamphlet entitled 'Odes by Mr. Gray,' with a vignette on the title-page of his Gothick castle, and a motto from Pindar $\Phi\Omega\text{N}\text{A}\text{N}\text{T}\text{A}\ \Sigma\text{Y}\text{N}\text{E}\text{T}\text{O}\text{I}\Sigma\text{I}$ which Gray englished as 'vocal to the intelligent alone.' It contained two odes, here called simply Ode I and Ode II, 'The Progress of Poesy' and 'The Bard.' The first of these odes is undoubtedly Gray's masterpiece, and deserves all the study that can be given to it. The subject, that of the great power of poetry, was one very near to Gray's heart as well as to his mind, and the scheme is well thought out. There is no feeling of strain in any part of it. Personification, with Gray generally a sign of strain, is kept within the limits approved by the great masters. Thus we have 'antic Sports and blue-eyed Pleasures' just as in the 'Allegro' we have 'Jest and youthful Jollity'; but there is no elaborate series of abstract figures like that in the two stanzas on the Passions in the Ode on Eton College. This fashionable personification perhaps justified itself to Gray as a combination of the imaginative method of Shakespeare with the clear definition of Dryden. What in Shakespeare would have been a metaphor, hinted at and immediately succeeded by another, becomes too often with Gray a substantial allegorical personage. There seems to us to-day something essentially unpoetical, because artificial, in the posturing groups of Furies and Graces, and we wonder that Gray with his fine critical sense did not feel this. We must recognise, however, that whenever he is deeply moved he escapes from the snare. Two consecutive stanzas in the 'Ode on Vicissitude' show how his verse becomes more direct as it deepens in feeling.

'Still, where rosy Pleasure leads,
See a kindred Grief pursue;
Behind the steps that Misery treads,
Approaching Comfort view:
The hues of Bliss more lightly glow,
Chastised by sabler tints of woe,
And blended form, with artful strife.
The strength and harmony of Life.

See the Wretch, that long has tost
 On the thorny bed of Pain,
 At length repair his vigour lost,
 And breathe and walk again :
 The meanest flowret of the vale,
 The simplest note that swells the gale,
 The common Sun, the air, the skies,
 To him are opening Paradise.'

When the two odes were reissued they were styled Pindaric, and they justify their title, being constructed in a series of strophe, antistrophe, and epode like the odes of Pindar. Ben Jonson had furnished one example in the ode to the memory of Sir Lucius Cary and Sir Henry Morrison, one strophe of which is the often-quoted stanza beginning, 'It is not growing like a tree.' But the name 'Pindarique' had been abused by Cowley, who, holding the theory that 'the lost excellences of another language' should be supplied by others of our own, had substituted an expansive eloquence, one might almost say loquacity, for the terse musical phrase of his model, and had entirely ignored the interrelation of strophe and antistrophe. Gray recovered for the Pindaric ode both the music of phrase and the balance of its parts.

Gray's second ode cannot be reckoned as unequivocal a success as its companion. It is founded on a tradition of the murder of the Welsh bards by Edward I, and the earlier portion, which consists of the spirited and justifiable curses of the last survivor on the king's progeny to the third and fourth generation, is proper to the subject, and contains much fine rhetoric and a few passages of a nobler quality. But having written the first three groups of stanzas, Gray held his hand for a couple of years ; and the conclusion does not carry out the scheme originally proposed. From the argument, which Mason printed from Gray's commonplace book, we learn that the Bard was to predict that all the king's cruelty 'shall never extinguish the noble ardour of poetic genius in this island ; and that men shall never be wanting to celebrate true virtue and valour in immortal strains, to expose vice and infamous pleasure, and boldly censure tyranny and oppression.' When Gray resumed the Ode he had changed his plan, and the present conclusion can appeal to none but Welshmen, for whom it is certain that Gray did not specially write. The consolation which the Bard finds in the future is the prospect of a line of Welsh kings, the Tudors, culminating in Elizabeth :

In the midst a Form divine :
 Her eye proclaims her of the Briton-line ;
 Her lyon-port, her awe-commanding face,
 Attemper'd sweet to virgin-grace.'

Elizabeth's reign is to be marked by a revival of poetry in Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, and an unending line beyond them. It must be allowed that the skill of the poet has disguised the weakness of the argument. For to make the consolation effective the efflorescence of poetry should have occurred under the first Tudor sovereign, in which case it might poetically have been presumed to be due to him ; and the Bard should not have overlooked Chaucer, who flourished under the sway of Edward's direct descendant Richard II, of whose accession the Bard sings in the only passage of the Ode which has passed into popular currency :

'Fair laughs the Morn, and soft the Zephyr blows,
 While proudly riding o'er the azure realm,
 In gallant trim the gilded Vessel goes ;
 Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm ;
 Regardless of the sweeping Whirlwind's sway,
 That, hush'd in grim repose, expects his evening-prey.'

The 'Elegy' is an expression of the common heart, though of that common heart purified and ennobled, and therefore it is of universal appeal ; of the Odes it is true to-day as in Gray's lifetime that they are vocal only to the intellectuals. But apart from its merits all Gray's poetry has a special interest owing to its place at the meeting-point of the Augustan and Romantic schools. On the one hand it retains the notion of poetry as a happy combination of words. Gray, in a letter to Mason, says : 'Extreme conciseness of expression, yet pure, perspicuous, and musical, is one of the grand beauties of lyric poetry' ; adding 'this I have always aimed at and could never attain.' Gray's instrument was always the file ; he had no taste for the verse cast at a jet ; and so he could accuse Collins of having a bad ear. In the second place, there are signs in Gray of that first-hand interest in nature and that respect for the whole of human nature, and not only its intellect, which was soon to inspire Cowper and Wordsworth. Perhaps Gray is at his modernest in the 'Ode on Vicissitude,' and in that impromptu couplet which Norton Nicholls preserved :

'There pipes the woodlark, and the song-thrush there
 Scattering his loose notes in the waste of air'—

if not most modern of all in that quatrain of the 'Elegy' which Gray's feeling for unity expunged, but which we cannot spare :

'There scatter'd oft the earliest of the year,
By Hands unseen, are show'rs of violets found :
The red-breast loves to build and warble there,
And little footsteps lightly print the ground.'

Leslie Stephen says happily about Gray and his friends that 'they were feeling round vaguely for a new mode of literary and artistic enjoyment.' This feeling after something more satisfying to the whole range of thought and emotion than was afforded by the critical school of Pope had already given evidence of itself in several ways. Thomson and Dyer, following each his particular bent, had found inspiration for poetry in country life and landscape. Gray welcomed the venture of both these poets. We know from his letters how attentive was his own observation, and how he took long journeys in search of the picturesque, especially in mountain scenery ; but the evidence of this in his poetry is only incidental, as in the reference to 'Snowdon's shaggy side.' Another form taken by this dissatisfaction was the revival of interest in the popular ballad literature. The discovery by Thomas Percy of his famous folio started a new form of poetry in which Goldsmith led the way. But though Gray had seen Percy's book as early as 1761, it came too late to influence his production ; and we may guess that his mind was too erudite to have found expression in the simplicity of the ballad. Of far more interest to him was Macpherson's discovery of fragments of Highland poetry. He describes himself as '*extasié* with their infinite beauty' ; on which the late Mr. Tovey, to whom a great debt is owed for his scholarly edition of Gray's letters, makes the dry comment that some of the fragments were worked up from passages in 'The Bard.' We may be glad that Macpherson's discovery came, like Percy's, too late to influence Gray's own poetry. His interest in the early literature of the European nations has given us a few fragments from the Norse and Welch. The remark of Leslie Stephen quoted above referred to the interest that Gray and Walpole took in Gothic architecture. This influenced Gray's poetry only indirectly ; but it had some effect in the way it was presented to the public. When Walpole undertook to convert his newly purchased house at Twickenham into a Gothick castle, the artist he employed to help him in his designs was Richard Bentley ; and when Gray had sprung suddenly into fame by the 'Elegy,' Walpole urged him to publish his other poems with designs by Bentley. Whether these deserve the poetical encomium Gray made upon them, I will not presume to say ; but they are undoubtedly very 'Gothick.'

It is as a poet that we celebrate Gray's bicentenary, but those persons who do not care for poetry may celebrate him as a man and a letter-writer. As a man he is secure of our affection as soon as we get to know him, and any one may know him who will read his letters, of which there is a great store ; and still more have come to light lately, and have been well edited by Mr. Paget Toynbee. There are few men of letters of so attractive a nature as Gray. Perhaps he is the most lovable of all except Charles Lamb, and with Lamb, despite many obvious differences, he has many points in common. They were both solitary creatures living a recluse life, in the world but not of it, their best companions among the dead ; they were both exquisite critics ; they were both a prey to melancholy, or rather, as Gray said, to 'leukocholy' ; white bile not black ; they had both a delicate and delightful humour ; they were both the soul of gentle goodness. And so it comes about that the letters of both, in which they live to us, are among the few external goods which are necessary to happiness. The charm of a letter of Gray's lies partly in this interest of his character, and partly in the perfect felicity with which everything is said. There is nothing slovenly, or far-fetched, or pompous, or makeshift ; even in the shortest and apparently most hasty note, his touch is perfectly sure and his taste faultless ; if we except some Hogarthian passages which smack of the age rather than the individual. It might not seem probable beforehand that the letters of a man whose days went 'round and round like the blind horse in the mill'—'swinging from chapel or hall home and from home to hall or chapel'—could have much to say that would be of general interest. Occasionally, indeed, he goes a journey—the grand tour with Walpole, or to the Highlands, or to see his friend Wharton at Old Park, or to Stoke Poges to his relations, and then we get lively enough descriptions. But these are episodes. The main topics of his every-day correspondence are his melancholy or his indolence, Mason's poetry, Cambridge and Church news, the British Museum, politics, criticism of current literature,—Rousseau, or Sterne, or Dodsley's poets,—his 'dab of musick and prints,' gothick, hyacinths, and the weather. Occasionally, only occasionally, he allows himself to slip out a little town gossip, 'as a decayed gentlewoman would a piece of right mecklin or a little quantity of run tea, but this only now and then, not to make a practice of it.'

THE REAL THING: 'S. O. S.'¹

BY WILLIAM HOPE HODGSON.

'Big liner on fire in 55.43 N. and 32.19 W.,' shouts the Captain, diving into his chart-room. 'Here we are! Give me the parallels!'

The First Officer and the Captain figure busily for a minute.

'North, 15 West,' says the Master; and 'North, 15 West,' assents the First Officer, flinging down his pencil. 'A hundred and seventeen miles, dead in the wind!'

'Come on!' says the Captain; and the two of them dash out of the chart-room into the roaring black night, and up on to the bridge.

'North, 15 West!' the Master shouts in the face of the burly helmsman. 'Over with her, smart!'

'North, 15 West, Sir,' shouts back the big quartermaster, and whirls the spokes to starboard, with the steering-gear engine roaring.

The great vessel swings round against the night, with enormous scends, smiting the faces of the great seas with her seventy-foot-high bows.

Crash! A roar of water aboard, as a hundred phosphorescent tons of sea-water hurls inboard out of the darkness, and rushes aft along the lower decks, boiling and surging over the hatchways, capstans, deck-fittings, and round the corners of the deck-houses.

The ship has hit the fifty-mile-an-hour gale full in the face, and the engine telegraph stands at full speed. The Master has word with that King of the Underworld, the Chief Engineer; and the Chief goes below himself to take charge, just as the Master has taken charge on deck.

There is fresh news from the Operator's Room. The vessel somewhere out in the night and the grim storm is the S.S. *Vanderfield*, with sixty first-class passengers and seven hundred steerage and she is alight forrard. The fire has got a strong hold, and they have already lost three boats, smashed to pieces as they tried to launch them, and every man, woman, and child in the boats crushed to death or drowned.

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'Damn these old-fashioned davits!' says the Master, as he reads the wireless operator's notes. 'They won't lift a boat out clear of the ship's side, if she's rolling a bit. The boats in a ship are just ornaments, if you've not got proper machinery for launching them. We've got the new derricks, and we can lower a boat, so she strikes the water, forty feet clear of the side, instead of bashing to pieces, like a sixty-foot pendulum, against our side!'

He shouts a question over his shoulder, standing there by the binnacle :

'What's she doing, Mister Andrews?'

'Twenty and three-quarter knots, Sir,' says the Second Officer, who has been in charge. 'But the Chief's raising her revolutions every minute. . . She's nearly on to the twenty-one now.'

'And even if we lick that we'll be over five hours reaching her,' mutters the Master to himself.

Meanwhile the wireless is beating a message of hope across a hundred miles of night and storm and wild waters.

'Coming! The R.M.S. *Cornucopia* is proceeding at full speed in your direction. Keep us informed how you are. . . .'

Then follows a brief unofficial statement, a heart-to-heart word between the young men operators of the two ships, across the hundred-mile gulf of black seas :

'Buck up, old man. We'll do it yet! We're simply piling into the storm, like a giddy cliff. She's doing close on twenty-one, they've just told me, against this breeze; and the Chief's down in the stokeholds himself with a fourteen-inch wrench and a double watch of stokers! Keep all your peckers up. I'll let you know if we speed-up any more!'

The Operator has been brief and literal, and has rather understated the facts. The Leviathan is now hurling all her fifty-thousand-ton length through the great seas at something approaching a twenty-two knot stride; and the speed is rising.

Down in the engine-room and stokeholds, the Chief, minus his overalls, is a coatless demi-god, with life in one hand and a fourteen-inch wrench in the other; not that this wrench is in any way necessary, for the half-naked men stream willing sweat in a silence broken only by the rasp of the big shovels and the clang of the furnace-doors, and the Chief's voice.

The Chief is young again; young and a King to-night, and the rough days of his youth have surged back over him. He has picked up the wrench unconsciously, and he walks about, twirling it in his

fist; and the stokers work the better for the homely sight of it, and the sharp tang of his words, that miss no man of them all.

And the great ship feels the effect. Her giant tread has broken into an everlasting thunder, as her shoulders hurl the seas to port and starboard, in shattered hills of water, that surge to right and left in half-mile drifts of phosphorescent foam, under the roll of her Gargantuan flanks.

The first hour has passed, and there have been two fresh messages from that vessel, flaming far off, lost and alone, out in the wild roar of the waters. There has been an explosion forrard in the burning ship, and the fire has come aft as far as the main bunkers. There has been a panic attempt to lower two more of the boats, and each has been smashed to flinders of wood against the side of the burning ship, as she rolled. Every soul in them has been killed or drowned, and the Operator in the burning ship asks a personal question that has the first touch of real despair in it; and there ensues another little heart-to-heart talk between the two young men:

'Honest now, do you think you can do it?'

'Sure,' says the Operator in the *Cornucopia*. 'We're doing what we've never done at sea before in heavy weather. We're touching within a knot of our "trials" speed—we're doing twenty-four and a half knots; and we're doing it against *this*! Honour bright, old man! I'll not deceive you at a time like this. I never saw anything like what we're doing. All the engineers are in the engine-room, and all the officers are on the boat-deck, overhauling the boats and gear. We've got those new forty-foot boat derricks, and we can shove a boat into the water with 'em, with the ship rolling half under. The Old Man's on the bridge; and I guess you're just going to be saved all right. . . . You ought to hear us! I tell you, man, she's just welting the seas to a pulp, and skating along to you on the top of them.'

The Operator is right. The great ship seems alive to-night, along all her shapely eight hundred feet of marvellous, honest, beautiful steel. Her enormous bows take the seas as on a horn, and hurl them roaring into screaming drifts of foam. She is singing a song, fore and aft, and the thunder of her grey steel flanks is stupendous, as she spurns the mutilated seas and the gale and the bleak intolerable miles into her wake.

The second and third hours pass, and part of the fourth, in an intermittent thunder of speed. And the speed has been further increased ; for now the Leviathan is laying the miles astern, twenty-nine in each hour ; her sides drunken with black water and spume—a dripping, league-conquering, fifty-thousand-ton shape of steel and steam and brains, going like some stupendous Angel of Help across the black Desolation of the night.

Incredibly far away, down on the black horizons of the night, there shows a faint red glow. There is shouting along the bridge.

'There she is !' goes the word fore and aft. 'There she is !'

Meanwhile the wireless messages pulse across the darkness : The fire is burning with terrible fury. The fore-part of the *Vanderfield's* iron skin is actually glowing red-hot in places. Despair is seizing everyone. Will the coming *Cornucopia* never, never come ?

The young Operators talk, using informal words :

'Look out to the South of you, for our searchlight,' replies the man in the wireless-room of the *Cornucopia*. 'The Old Man's going to play it against the clouds, to let you see we're coming. Tell 'em all to look out for it. It'll cheer them up. We're walking along through the smother like an express. Man ! Man ! we're doing our " trials " speed, twenty-five and a half knots, *against this*. Do you realise it—*against this* ! Look along to the South. Now !'

There is a hissing on the fore-bridge, quite unheard in the roar of the storm ; and then there shoots out across the miles of night and broken seas the white fan-blaze of the searchlight. It beats like an enormous baton against the black canopy of the monstrous storm-clouds, beating to the huge, thundering melody of the roar and onward hurl of the fifty-thousand-ton rescuer, tossing the billows to right and left, as she strides through the miles.

And what a sight it is, in the glare of the great light, as it descends and shows the huge seas ! A great cliff of black water rears up, and leaps forward at the ship's bows. There is a thunderous impact, and the ship has smitten the great sea in twain, and tossed it boiling and roaring on to her iron flanks ; and is treading it into the welter of foam that surrounds her on every side—a raging testimony, of foam and shattered seas, to the might of her mile-devouring stride.

Another, and another, and another black, moving cliff rises up out of the water-valleys, which she strides across; and each is broken and tossed mutilated from her shapely, mighty, unafraid shoulders.

A message is coming, very weak and faint, through the receiver: 'We've picked up your searchlight, old man. It's comforted us mightily; but we can't last much longer. The dynamo's stopped. I'm running on my batteries. . . .' It dwindles off into silence, broken by fragments of a message, too weakly projected to be decipherable.

'Look at her!' the officers shout to one another on the bridge; for the yell of the wind and the ship-thunder is too great for ordinary speech to be heard. They are staring through their glasses. Under a black canopy of bellied storm-clouds, shot with a dull red glowing, there is tossed up on the backs of far-away seas, a far-off ship, seeming incredibly minute, because of the distance; and from her fore-part spouts a swaying tower of flame.

'We'll never do it in time!' says the young Sixth Officer into the ear of the Fifth.

The burning ship is now less than three miles away, and the black backs of the great seas are splashed with huge, ever shifting reflections.

Through the glasses it is possible now to see the details of the tremendous hold the fire has got on the ship; and, away aft, the huddled masses of the six hundred odd remaining passengers.

As they watch, one of the funnels disappears with an unheard crash, and a great spout of flame and sparks shoot up.

'It'll go through her bottom!' shouts the Second Officer; but they know this does not happen, for she still floats.

Suddenly comes the thrilling cry of 'Out derricks!' and there is a racing of feet and shouted orders. Then the great derricks swing out from the ship's side, a boat's length above the boat-deck. They are hinged, and supported down almost to the draught line of the ship. They reach out forty feet clear of the ship's side.

The Leviathan is bursting through the final miles of wild seas; and then the telegraph bell rings, and she slows down, not more than

ten or twelve hundred yards to wind'ard of the burning hull, which rises and falls, a stupendous spectacle on the waste of black seas.

The fifty-thousand-ton racer has performed her noble work, and now the work lies with the boats and the men.

The searchlight flashes down on to the near water, and the boats shoot out in the 'travellers,' then are dropped clear of the mighty flanks of the Mother Ship.

The Leviathan lies to windward of them, to break the force of the seas, and oil bags are put out.

The people in the burning ship greet the ship with mad cheers. The women are hove bodily into the seas, on the ends of lines. They float in their cork jackets. Men take children in their arms, and jump, similarly equipped. And all are easily picked up by the boats, in the blaze of the rescuer's searchlights that brood on leagues of ocean, strangely subdued by the floods of oil which the big ship is pumping on to the seas. Everywhere lies the strange sheen of oil, here in a sudden valley of brine, unseen, or there on the shoulder of some monstrous wave, suddenly eased of its deadliness; or again, the same fluorescence swirls over some half-league of eddy-flattened ocean, resting between efforts—tossing minor oil-soothed ridges into the tremendous lights.

Then the Leviathan steams to leeward of the burning ship, and picks up her boats. She takes the rescued passengers aboard, and returns to windward; then drops the boats again, and repeats the previous operations, until every man, woman, and child is saved.

As the last boat swings up at the end of the great derricks aboard the *Cornucopia* there is a final volcano of flame from the burning ship, lighting up the black belly of the sky into billowing clouds of redness. There falls the eternal blackness of the night. . . . The *Vanderfield* has gone.

The Leviathan swings round through the night, with her six hundred saved; and begins to sing again in her deep heart, laying the miles and the storm astern once more, in a deep low thunder.

THE WAR IN PERSPECTIVE.

BY DR. W. H. FITCHETT.

THE present war is the biggest event in secular history—so big indeed that its scale evades the imagination. Its cause cannot be condensed into a formula or its story told in a volume. But every war, sooner or later, finds literary expression; and the present gigantic struggle needs, and will create, a new literature of its own, beside which all the rest of secular literature will seem petty. A hundred years hence professional soldiers will be spelling out its strategy; toiling historians will be collating and recording its events; philosophers will be analysing its causes, moralists in spectacles will be assessing its spiritual elements. What a literature—strategic, scientific, political, financial, geographical, legal, medical, personal—it will be!

And when all such questions are dealt with there will yet remain that aspect of the war which has nothing to do with strategy, or politics, or finance. It deals with the purely human interests and emotions of the struggle; its picturesqueness; its dramatic incidents; the strophe and antistrophe of moral forces it reveals; its literary aspects, in a word; things in it which would have arrested the imagination of Shakespeare, and supplied the text for mightier dramas than 'Macbeth' or 'Hamlet'; incidents that Scott would have woven into romance; follies which might have given Swift the text for keener satire than even his 'Tale of a Tub'; heroisms that a greater Byron may set to more resounding music than even those famous lines which tell of Waterloo. And, it may be added, it is possible already to see in this amazing war some aspects which will do more than merely challenge the literary imagination, the sense of the wonderful.

To begin with what is nearest: the new scale of the war, the strange temper, the terrific weapons with which it is being fought, will certainly prove, for centuries to come, an irresistible challenge to the literary imagination. When the first shot in this war was fired, the whole familiar and accepted arithmetic of battle went suddenly to wreck. It was a war, not of armies, but of nations. As a result we have to think of the contending forces in terms of millions.

Australia, for example, supplies a proof of the enormously

expanded scale of this war. The standing army of Imperial Rome consisted of 260,000 men. Australia is a community of only five million people; war to it is a totally new experience. Yet it has raised, equipped, and sent to a battlefield 12,000 miles distant an army equal in number to the standing army of the Caesars, at the time the Caesars were the masters of the civilised world. Great Britain affords another example of the amazingly expanded realm of the war. She hates standing armies, hates them so much that she will only pass the Mutiny Act, which makes an army of any sort possible, for a year at a time. The British formula is a big fleet and a little army. When this war broke out the regular forces of Great Britain consisted of only 186,000 men. When the war was not yet two years old, the British fleet had taken a scale without precedent in history; in addition Great Britain had raised an army which approached 5,000,000 and in which every man was a volunteer. If the average Liberal member of Parliament had been told, say, three years ago, that Great Britain, in addition to having a fleet in scale so tremendous, would have a land force of 5,000,000, he probably would have assaulted his interlocutor. But Great Britain, having raised by voluntary effort those 5,000,000, has actually passed a Conscription Bill for the remainder of its population.

The battles of to-day take such a scale, last so long, and are fought under such strange conditions, that we have to invent new names for them. They are neither 'sieges' nor 'battles,' but a combination of both; and so we call them siege-battles. That 'first and last of fights, king-making Waterloo,' when set against the arithmetic of the present war, dwindles into a skirmish. The little shallow valley outside Brussels, where Napoleon and Wellington measured swords with each other, and one of the greatest soldiers in history ended his career, is in area three miles by two, and lies open to a single glance. Waterloo itself began at 11 o'clock in the morning, and ended before 9 o'clock at night; it might have been fought under the Factories Act.

Let there be set beside it the great siege-battle of the Aisne, which began on September 15, 1914, and is going on still, with louder thunders and vaster slaughter than ever. Its field has lengthened into a ribbon of contorted trenches stretching from the North Sea to the Alps, a distance of 500 miles, and from, or in, those strange, vast, far-running ditches, now for nearly two years, some 3,000,000 men, the best fighters in history, armed with an

artillery which suggests nothing so much as the weapons with which Milton equipped Satan and his hosts in their war with the angels, have been slaying each other. The deep thunder of the guns, the tumult of fighting men, have never ceased to sound at one point or another along those five hundred miles for nearly two years. Verdun, with all its passion and slaughter, its six months' wrestle of guns and infantry, is a mere episode in this tremendous siege-battle; a score of Waterloos and Marengos have been fought during its progress, and have scarcely found a record.

The most brilliant chapter in British military history before the present war was certainly Wellington's campaigns in the Peninsula. They lasted six years. The British forces under Wellington seldom approached, and never exceeded, 50,000 men. Napier condenses the story into a single sentence of stately and resonant prose. In that great struggle the British forces 'fought and won nineteen pitched battles, made or sustained ten sieges, took four great fortresses; killed, wounded, and took 200,000 enemies, etc. ;' and the cost of all this is to be found in 'the bones of 40,000 British soldiers' which 'lie scattered on the plains and mountains of the Peninsula.' But Sir John French's army in France lost in three weeks more than Wellington's armies in the Peninsula lost in six years! In a single episode of the siege-battle beyond the Aisne Valley—say, the second battle of Ypres, which lasted four days—the British employed greater forces, and sustained greater losses, than in Wellington's six campaigns in the Peninsula.

The most brilliant, desperate, and bloody siege of those campaigns was that of Badajos, in 1812. No one who has read the story Napier tells of how, on the night Badajos was stormed, the men of the Light Division died on its dark breach, can ever forget the tale. Now the siege of Badajos lasted twenty days; it cost Wellington 5000 men. The storming parties were let loose at 10 o'clock on the night of April 6; when morning dawned Badajos was won. Compare this with Verdun. The German attack began on February 23. Some 3000 guns—amongst them the great howitzers that destroyed Namur—poured for days and nights an unceasing tempest of high explosives on the French lines. Then the assault was launched. For nearly six months the thunder of the German guns has risen and sunk, but never ceased; again and again, now on one point, now on another, the vast grey waves of the German infantry have flung themselves in bloody ebb and

flow on the French position. What the German losses have been can only be guessed; they must reach half a million men. And still the tricolour flies over Verdun.

If we take the fighting on the sea, again, there is the same tremendous increase of scale. Trafalgar is—or *was*, till May 31 of the present year—the greatest sea-fight under the British flag, and it is curious to set it in contrast with the fight in the North Sea. The resemblances and differences of the two great battles are alike most striking. That little, one-eyed, one-armed, weather-beaten, sun-tanned figure, Nelson, is the dominating figure in Trafalgar; and he is still the most famous of all who have led the fleets of Great Britain into battle. But if we turn to the recent battle in the North Sea—a battle so splendidly fought, and so ill-told—it is clear that, in quickness of vision to read the iron alphabet of sea-battle, and in the dash and fire with which he dared all risks to turn and hold his enemy, Sir David Beatty is of Nelson's school, and has 'the Nelson touch.' Nelson himself, indeed, could hardly have done better on that foggy afternoon in the North Sea than Sir David Beatty did. For seamanship, for technical skill, and for pure valour, the North Sea fight, in brief, will compare with Trafalgar. But in its general aspect, in the scale of the forces engaged, and in the amount of destruction achieved—and the terrifying speed of that destruction—the two battles are utterly unlike each other. A comparison betwixt them shows how completely the whole physiognomy of sea-battle is changed. Beatty's six battle-cruisers carried only 9-inch armour, but they had the hitting-power of Dreadnoughts and the pace of destroyers; and *speed* was the great feature of the North Sea fight. The ships engaged under both flags were amongst the swiftest afloat, and the battle was fought at full speed. At the critical moment of the fight the ships of Beatty's squadron were travelling at the rate of thirty miles an hour, firing as they raced. They could head, and turn, the line of German ships because they outpaced them. But if the ships were swift, death was swifter. It was as they whirled around across the head of the German line that the *Queen Mary* and the *Indefatigable*, in turn, were destroyed, and destroyed in a space of time to be reckoned in minutes—whether by the concentrated fire of the big German Dreadnoughts, or by the misadventure of striking a floating mine, is not clear.

It is exactly at the two points of furious speed and of destructive energy that the contrast betwixt Trafalgar and the fight in

the North Sea is greatest. At Trafalgar, as everyone knows, the Franco-Spanish fleet was drawn up, or had drifted, into a straggling crescent four miles from tip to tip—thirty-three great line-of-battle ships, armed with more than 3000 guns, a curving forest of masts and flags. The British in two columns—Nelson in the *Victory* leading one column, Collingwood in the *Royal Sovereign* the other—bore down on the enemy, but there was no speed in the movement. They drifted, rather than sailed, at the rate of less than two miles an hour—less than a walking-pace, that is—into this curve of hostile guns; and the coolness of the British crews and their officers was in keeping with the deliberation with which their ships approached the enemy. The *Royal Sovereign* was a quarter of a mile ahead of its column, and was certain to receive the concentrated fire of the enemy's line for nearly half an hour without support, yet Collingwood was not only nibbling but *paring* an apple on the quarter-deck while waiting for the great game to begin.

Nelson's three-deckers, compared with the modern Dreadnought or battle-cruiser, were tiny ships. They had an average tonnage of a little over 2000 tons—the *Victory* herself was of 2223 tons. Now, a ship of the *Queen Elizabeth* class is of 27,000 tons, equal to the tonnage of the whole column of Nelson's ships at Trafalgar. The *Victory* carried 101 guns, about one-third being 32-pounders; there were only two carronades firing a shot of sixty-two pounds. If every gun on the *Victory* had been fired in one sudden broadside, the entire weight of metal would have been 2296 pounds, or a little over one ton of iron, and the effective range would be less than half a mile. But the *Queen Elizabeth*, with her 15-inch guns, could discharge, in a single broadside, *twenty-seven tons* of steel, and could strike her mark with that tempest of flying metal—a swarm of aerolites—once every thirty seconds, a dozen miles away.

The number of men killed at Trafalgar, leaving out the wounded, was only 449. On the *Victory* itself 57 were killed, on the 'Fighting' *Teméraire* 47, on the *Royal Sovereign* 47, on the *Belle Isle* 33, or a total of 184 killed in the four leading ships. But the *Cressy*, the *Aboukir*, and the *Hogue* were sunk in fifteen minutes—without seeing the submarine that sank them—and 680 seamen were drowned, a loss fifty per cent. greater than that of the whole of Nelson's fleet at Trafalgar. Sir David Beatty's two battle-cruisers, the *Queen Mary* and the *Indefatigable*, were sunk in a time as brief as the three unfortunate cruisers, and sunk when travelling at their

highest speed, and firing as they raced. Each carried a complement of 900 men, and when they went down the loss of life was four times as great as that of Trafalgar.

A century hence what may be called the German psychology, as revealed in this war, will still puzzle the curiosity and challenge the imagination of unborn generations. For the first time in history we have the spectacle of a nation of seventy million people, Christian in faith, highly civilised, strong on the practical side, of shrewdest business capacity, with a genius for business and for organisation, a nation that has given to education, or what it thinks is education, a larger place in its life than any other in history, yet which somehow is smitten with a sort of insanity, an insanity partly moral and partly intellectual. And what heightens the wonder is the circumstance that it mistakes its very lunacy for culture. To make the tragedy complete, it is an insanity organised, armed, disciplined, terrible, equipped with all the resources of science, and having borrowed from science new engines and subtleties of destruction without precedent in the history of war.

In its essence what we are watching is the spiritual bankruptcy of a great nation; but the whole story bristles with psychological problems. Its spiritual landmarks have shifted. Good and evil are terms in its politics which have not merely lost, but—a much more terrible thing—have *exchanged* their significance. It mistakes right for right. It labels its vices as virtues.

In one sense, Germany is rich in intellectual ability—the Germany to which Beethoven sang, and Goethe discoursed philosophy, for which Kant moralised, and at which Heine jested. It has a list of names great in poetry, philosophy, and scholarship. Germany, too, has done great things in science, though not so much in the realm of scientific discovery. It adapts rather than discovers; it excels in translating the scientific discoveries of other races into practical terms. Noticeable, also, is the fact that the great names in German literature, philosophy, and scholarship are not Prussian; and it is Prussia, and the Prussianised form of Germany, which is troubling the world. Luther came from Eisleben; Leibnitz was a Czech; Kant was of Scottish blood; Bismarck, it is amusing to remember, told Prince Napoleon, 'I am *not* a German; I am a Prussian, a Wend'—that is, a Slav. Both Nietzsche and Treitschke came of a Slav stock; most of the great 'German' musicians came of a Jewish strain; Heine was, of course, a pure Jew.

Nearly all the public documents issued by the German Government during this war, and all the speeches of its statesmen, are thick-inlaid with statements which, if not blank lies, and known by the speaker or writer to be lies, are yet proofs of some disordered quality in the mind of the speaker or writer. Sometimes the speaker seems to be self-hypnotised, so that he really believes a lie as big as a mountain to be the truth; or he suffers from some eccentric paralysis of the memory which enables him to forget what he has said, or written, only a moment before.

The famous 'scrap of paper' incident, taken as a whole, has the office of a searchlight as showing the morbid condition both of German morals and of German intelligence. Anybody with a touch of literary imagination will look back upon that scene in a room in Berlin, when the German Chancellor complained to Sir Edward Goschen, 'You are going to war with us over a scrap of paper,' and recognise it as one of the most picturesque, as well as the great and critical, moments in history. The German represented the greatest military Power in the world, the Englishman the greatest naval Power. Had both agreed to dismiss as a mere 'scrap of paper' the treaty that guards the neutrality of Belgium, the sanctity of all treaties would have disappeared at a breath.

But that dismissal into space as a mere scrap of paper of the treaty guaranteeing the neutrality of Belgium, which bore the name of Germany, was to Germany herself a worse disaster than the loss of a pitched battle. It was a form of suicide. It destroyed her public credit; it dismissed her from the realm of good faith. When, at the end of the war, the representatives of the nations now in conflict sit around some table in London or in Paris to draw up terms of peace, the ghost of this scrap of paper will cost Germany much, for she has stripped herself of all title to be trusted. Now, a blunder so unspeakably stupid on the part of men so able shows that at that moment, and in that act, the brains of the men who were the representatives of Germany were in some curious state of paralysis.

But this gigantic blunder is to this day being pursued by Germany with explanations and justifications which, as examples of unreason, suggest nothing so much as the logic employed in 'Alice in Wonderland.' The German Chancellor himself some time afterwards asked the world to believe that what he meant was that 'a scrap of paper' represented the *British* idea of the value of a treaty, while Germany 'took her responsibility towards neutral States

seriously.' And Bethmann-Hollweg offered this explanation after Germany had actually violated Belgian neutrality, and Great Britain had gone to war to maintain it!

The German Chancellor offered, in the very same speech, yet another explanation in open quarrel with the explanation just given. At the time he described the treaty as 'a scrap of paper,' he had 'reason to believe,' he told the Reichstag, that the Belgians themselves had destroyed their own neutrality by a convention they had made with England for the introduction of British troops; but as he lacked formal proof of the circumstance, he did not mention it at the time. Since then they had captured Brussels, and found, in the archives there, the actual text of the convention with England, by which Belgium violated its own neutrality. As a matter of fact, the guilty document which the German Chancellor quoted was not a 'convention' at all, but notes of a 'conversation' betwixt the British military attaché and Major-General Ducalme, a Belgian officer. It was an academic discussion of what might be done 'after Germany had entered Belgian territory'; and it was endorsed as 'not binding' on either of the two nations. And the German Chancellor quotes this discussion of what might be done to *guard* its neutrality against German attack as a *surrender* of its neutrality. This is very much as though a burglar, caught in the act of plundering a house, claimed that his burglary was justifiable, as he found—*after* he had broken into the house—that its owner had a revolver under his pillow.

The doctrine of the freedom of the sea which Germany has suddenly begun to preach at the top of its voice is yet another proof of either the entire absence of any sense of humour in the German mind, or of a morbid condition of the German conscience. For Great Britain, the geographical distribution of her Empire makes an overwhelming superiority in naval power a condition of its existence; but the seas of the planet, under her supremacy, have been free to every flag—except the black flag of the pirate. She has never abused her sea-power. It is Germany that has made the sea terrible by sowing it with drifting mines and making it a field for the performances of its submarines. Great Britain has supreme power on the sea, Germany has—or *had*—supreme military power on land; and what Germany means by 'the freedom of the sea' is that Great Britain's advantage should be cancelled out of existence, while her own advantage should remain undiminished.

It is worth quoting the words in which, in his clear-cut, sword-

edged prose, Mr. A. J. Balfour analyses and describes this new German doctrine. 'The most simple-minded,' he says, 'must feel suspicious when they find that *these missionaries of maritime freedom are the very same persons who preach and who practise upon the land the extremest doctrines of military absolutism.*

'She poses as a reformer of international law, though international law has never bound her for an hour. She objects to "economic pressure" when it is exercised by a fleet, though she sets no limit to the brutal completeness with which economic pressure may be imposed by an army. She sighs over the suffering which war imposes upon peaceful commerce, though her own methods of dealing with peaceful commerce would have wrung the conscience of Captain Kidd. She denounces the maritime methods of the Allies, though in her efforts to defeat them she is deterred neither by the rules of war, the appeal of humanity, nor the rights of neutrals.'

Now, when a Power like Germany, with such a record on the sea, attires itself in the garb of a missionary, and begins to preach the gospel of 'the freedom of the sea,' the phenomenon appeals to the literary imagination by its exquisite absurdity; to the alienist it suggests the urgent need of medical treatment.

That the Power which has scorched with fire and splashed red with blood the little State it had sworn to protect, which sank the *Lusitania* and shot Nurse Cavell, should complain to high heaven that Great Britain had broken the regulations of the Hague Convention, is an audacity which paralyses the sane intelligence. It is as though Jack the Ripper published a tract against vivisection, or Deeming wrote a pious homily on 'How to Make Home Happy.'

Another illustration of this lunatic quality in the German mind is found in the furious complaints against Great Britain for starving—or for even *trying* to starve—Germany, including its women and children. And yet it was Germany that in 1870 drew lines of blockade around Paris, and waited for starvation to bring the 'gay city' to surrender! No German city yet has known the horrors of starvation as the German armies compelled Paris to know them. The death-rate of little children during those sad months rose to 5000 a week, and Bismarck, when he rode into Paris after its surrender, expressed his surprise at seeing *any* children yet alive. Von Hindenburg, when told quite recently that Russian peasants were starving in Poland, said 'It is just as well that it should be so; we cannot make war sentimentally.' Then he repeated the formula

which is the true *credo* of every Prussian soldier : ' *The more ruthlessly war is waged, the more humane does it really become* ; for that is the best way to bring it to a rapid conclusion.' But what more complete proof of the one-sidedness of the German mind can be discovered than the fact, say, that at the present moment it is itself starving Belgium, so that its inhabitants have to be fed by the pity of the world, and at the same time it is screaming aloud to the whole universe because the meat ration in Berlin has to be reduced in consequence of the British blockade ? The puzzle is not so much that Germany acts with such gaping inconsistency ; it has not the faintest notion that it is inconsistent. This is a mental condition rare outside, and not even always found *inside*, a lunatic asylum.

The delirious self-complacency of the Prussianised German, again, leaves the whole outside world speechless. There is no other such instance of megalomania in history. No other people pay such loud compliments to themselves, and pay them with such unashamed diligence. They decorate themselves with compliments as a savage decorates himself with bits of broken glass. A philosopher like Hegel set the example of proclaiming in German accents and to German ears the 'godlike glory' of the German nation. The 'spiritual nature of Germanism,' we are assured seven days a week by German editors, makes it the standard-bearer of Christian Europe. Morality, we are warned, 'depends on the preservation of the Christian Germanic spirit and on the political power of Germany. Civilisation and Christianity are unthinkable without the Germans.'

'Germany,' says Professor Lamprecht, 'is now the protector and pillar of European civilisation ; and after bloody victories the world will be healed by being Germanised.' 'We Germans are singled out by Providence to march at the head of all *Kultur* people. . . . We have the highest mental creative gifts ; we form the crown of *Kultur* in the whole of creation.' Can anyone doubt, after reading through pages like this, that Germany is self-hypnotised ? There must be some morbid condition in the character which thus exudes compliments to itself through every pore in its skin. It is the sign of a disordered intelligence.

The doctrine of 'frightfulness,' as a method in war, is the special contribution of Germany to the present conflict. It is curious, however, to remember that the most terrible example of 'frightfulness,' as far as Europe is concerned, was supplied by Germany 300 years ago in the famous, or rather infamous, Thirty Years' War ;

and a chapter from its grim pages reads like nothing so much as a page from the German performances in Belgium in 1914-15. The slaughter in Germany during that period was so huge that in 1648 the country had only a third of the population of 1618; in some districts the depopulation was so great that every man was allowed to have *two* wives! It is a German historian who says that 'even now the injury done to the psychology of the German people by the moral and intellectual decay of the Thirty Years' War has hardly been repaired.' Those words were written before the present war broke out, but there are some pages in the performances of Germany to-day that justify that statement.

What makes the folly of Germany to-day absolutely unique, however, is the fact that, in its adoption of 'frightfulness' as a war measure, it takes the performances of the Thirty Years' War, translates them into modern terms, practises them on a new scale, and *enjoins* them as *virtues*! The German soldier is instructed, for reasons of humanity, to be as inhuman as possible; and the German War Book gives grim details of what can be done, and supports its instructions by logic which, if it is dreadful, is certainly plausible. If war is made more frightful, it is argued, it will be made shorter; so it is a service to humanity to bombard defenceless towns, burn whole villages, shoot unarmed citizens, including women and children. One German divine, indeed—and German divines during this war have done and said some wonderful things—preached a sermon to show that 'frightfulness' carried to the *nth* was a form—a German form—of fulfilling the commandment, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' 'If you love your neighbour, you will do your best to prevent him being caught in the red tide of war—or to get him out of it—as early as possible; and you will achieve this best by making war as terrible as you can.'

The committee which inquired into German atrocities in Belgium, and is responsible for the Bryce Report, had on it such shrewd, practical, hard-headed men as Lord Bryce, Sir Edward Clarke, Sir Frederick Pollock, and their report is the most dreadful indictment ever drawn up against any nation, civilised or uncivilised.

It says: 'In the minds of Prussian officers, war seems to have become a sort of sacred mission, one of the highest functions of the omnipotent State, which is itself as much an army as a State. Ordinary morality and the ordinary sentiment of pity vanish in its presence, superseded by a new standard which justifies to the soldier every means that can conduce to success, however shocking to a

natural sense of justice and humanity, however revolting to his own feeling. . . . Cruelty becomes legitimate when it promises victory.' Then a very pregnant sentence is added: 'It is a specifically military doctrine, the outcome of a theory held by a ruling caste who have brooded and thought and written and talked and dreamed about war until they have fallen under its obsession, and been hypnotised by its spirit. . . . If this explanation be the true one, the mystery is solved, and that which seemed scarcely credible becomes more intelligible, though not less pernicious.'

The use of 'frightfulness' as a method of war, in other words, is the result of diseased psychological conditions. To have 'brooded and thought and written and talked and dreamed about war' is a process which might well result in an evil obsession as real, and as devilish in its spirit and its fruits, as possession by the devil himself. But the most astonishing thing in this whole astonishing story is that Germany betrays no sense that it has done anything worthy of blame. It learns with a bewildered exasperation that the outside world disapproves of this example of German 'culture.' The Kaiser is quite sure that he has the Divine approval in this, and everything else he does. From the wireless station at Berlin an official 'explanation' of this stupendous crime of a destroyed city was sent to the newspapers of the world:

'The only means of preventing surprise attacks from the civil population has been to interfere with unrelenting severity, and to create examples which by their frightfulness would be a warning to the whole country.'

Now, as an example of inverted ethics, this is almost worthy of a place in De Quincey's essay on 'Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts.' 'The German Government,' says Secretary Hay, 'is generally brutal, but not often silly.' Here, however, it is at once both silly and brutal in a quite superlative degree. It is, of course, exactly this doctrine of 'frightfulness' which has made Germany the outlaw of the civilised world.

Perhaps nothing in this war will so sharply arrest what we have called the literary imagination as the uncertainty, the dim half-lights as to its reasons and issues, with which it began.

Some of the 'explanations' of the war are foolish; some are cynical. The Hon. Bertrand Russell, for example, has written a book on the war in which he says the nations of Central Europe are fighting for much the same reason dogs do—because '*they don't*

like each other's smell ! Would anyone quote now, as an explanation of the war, that couple of pistol-shots in a street in Serajevo which slew the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife ? It is like offering the bursting of a soda-water bottle as the explanation of a Niagara, or tracing an earthquake to the explosion of a cracker. The Austrian ultimatum to Servia seems to be the match which fired the magazine ; but if there had been no ' magazine ' the ' match ' would have been quite innocent.

For Great Britain, the first reason of the war was something immediate and concrete—the German invasion of Belgium. Great Britain was pledged, both by express treaty and by its historic policy, to maintain that neutrality ; and when the German columns crossed the Belgian frontier war was inevitable. It was a simple question of good faith ; England, Mr. Asquith declared, must keep her pledged word. But when the war was begun it was quickly realised that the existence of the Empire depended on its result ; and so Mr. Bonar Law told the House of Commons, ' This is a fight for our national existence.' That is certainly true, and it applies with greatest force to the Dominions. If the British Empire goes into liquidation, the most coveted assets will be Australia, with its 12,000 miles of girdling sea, its radiant climate, its mineral wealth, its vast pastures, or New Zealand, the Great Britain of the Pacific. The men in the French and Flemish trenches are certainly fighting for—amongst other things—the safety of every home in Australia and New Zealand. But the war raised the question of the value of the treaty relations which bind civilised States together ; so, as Lord Rosebery put it, we are fighting for ' the sanctity of public law in Europe.' A German victory would turn every treaty throughout Christendom into a ' scrap of paper.' In the first message, again, King George addressed to the Empire, he said, ' We are fighting for the continuity of civilisation ; ' and *that* also is true. The defeat of the Allies would put not only Europe, but Christendom, back into the Dark Ages.

In this way, as the war went on, its ' reasons ' expanded : the obligation of the pledged word ; our national existence ; the sanctity of public law ; the continuity of civilisation. Yet even these reasons all put together are inadequate. There remains something in the war differentiating it from any other ever fought ; some intangible and invisible element not easy to define. In his famous speech in the Guildhall Mr. Asquith expressed this by saying ' This is not so much a material as a spiritual conflict.' It is a con-

flict, in other words, not racial, political, dynastic, or a mere wrestle of political ideals. It is a battle of opposing ethical codes. We are fighting not merely a nation, but a doctrine—something that steel cannot pierce nor high explosives wreck. And it is a doctrine armed, disciplined, terrible; fighting with 17-inch howitzers and poisonous gases, with submarines.

But what exactly is the 'doctrine' against which we are fighting? It is customary to quote Nietzsche at this point, and find in his teaching the germ of the 'doctrine' for which to-day Germany fights, and against which the rest of the world is in arms. But for one thing it is difficult to discover any single sustained and intelligible 'doctrine' in the structure of Nietzsche's works. He died in a lunatic asylum, and had a strain of lunacy in his writings, if not in his blood, long before his insanity came under medical treatment. He had a touch of genius, but thin partitions divided his genius from madness. If Germany took its creed from Nietzsche it would be not only furiously anti-Christian and furiously atheistic, but even furiously non-moral. 'Morality,' Nietzsche said, 'ought to be shot at. Pangs of conscience were indecent.' In that dim realm into which his half-insane mind wandered—the 'twilight of the gods'—evil and good had no existence. As for Christianity, he called it 'the greatest of all conceivable corruptions,' the 'one immortal blemish of mankind.' Jesus Christ, for Nietzsche, was 'a knave, a charlatan.' Everyone knows how Nietzsche took the Beatitudes and inverted them. His creed combined the theology of a lunatic asylum with the ethics of a gaol. Now the Germany against which the world is fighting to-day is certainly not atheistic, and it at least thinks itself to be intensely Christian.

What makes the tragedy of Germany in this war, the thing which puzzles even those who are fighting against it, is the fact that Germany is acting on a doctrine stranger and more terrible than Paganism itself. It undertakes to be *both* Christian and Pagan at the same time; Christian in the individual life, Pagan as a nation. It has two eternally hostile codes of ethics: one for the individual and the other for the State. As a private citizen the German may be a Christian, and ought to be one; but the moment he puts on a spike-helmet, or sits at a Government desk, he strips himself of all Christian morals; vice and virtue change their names for him. As a soldier he can clothe himself with 'frightfulness'; can rape, plunder, kill, burn, with the entire approval of his official—that is to say, his Paganised—conscience. As a diplomatist, he can lie

and cheat and forswear himself, and leave his Christian self-respect untouched. For Germany acts on the theory that the State is a non-moral, predatory entity, for which the distinction betwixt good and evil does not exist. It stands in no relation to God ; it has no more morals than a tiger ; it acts on the law of the jungle. Might, in its dreadful code, is right.

In the Prussianised Germany against which we are fighting we have, in brief, a double personality. When it acts as a nation it undergoes a transformation more terrible than that in R. L. Stevenson's tale when Dr. Jekyll turned into Mr. Hyde. All the separate individualities of Germany melt into one gigantic Mr. Hyde—Mr. Hyde in a spike-helmet. Or, to change the figure, they become the 'great blond beast' of Nietzsche, lawless, predatory, invincible, the superman, a non-moral monster. The supermen, says Nietzsche, 'where a foreign country begins, revert to the beast-of-prey conscience, like jubilant monsters who come with bravado from a ghastly bout of murder, arson, rape, and torture. . . . The nation becomes a magnificent blond brute, avidly rampant for spoil and victory.'

Treitschke, the little stone-deaf professor of history, proclaimed the doctrine that the State is a non-moral entity, for which an ethical code has no meaning. Bernhardt puts the matter more explicitly. 'Jesus Christ,' he says, 'came into the world to establish a society founded on love ; but that principle does not extend to the State' ; in all that concerns the State, Jesus Christ has no authority. His laws do not extend to *that* realm. When before in history have we this doctrine proclaimed from the iron lips of 17-inch howitzers ? Here lies the explanation of all that puzzles us in the present war—the strange perversities discoverable in German policy : its contempt for truth, its capacity for cruelty ; its blindness to moral distinctions. We are fighting with a nation which, taken individually, believes itself to be Christian ; but, taken as a nation, it is by deliberate choice Pagan.

'*They chose new gods . . . then was war in the gate ;*' so runs an ancient Hebrew psalm, explaining a dark page in a dark history. In those words, cause and effect are set side by side. Germany has certainly chosen 'a new god' ; a god of war ; the god of high explosives, of poison gases, of submarines ; a god of material forces, of battles and bloodshed—as ultimate arbiter in the struggle to spread the Pan-German ideal. Everyone remembers how Nietzsche inverted the Beatitudes. 'Blessed,' he said, 'are'—not the meek

—but ‘the strong, for *they* shall inherit the earth.’ ‘Blessed are’ —not the peacemakers—but ‘the war-makers, for they shall be called the sons of Odin.’ Cramb said that in Europe two great spiritual forces, Napoleon and Christ, oppose each other, and their conflict is ‘the most significant spiritual phenomenon of the twentieth century.’ He adds that, in Germany, ‘Corsica has conquered Galilee’; Napoleon, or what Napoleon represents, is worshipped; not Christ, or what Christ teaches.

But the Germans do not understand even the Napoleon they accept as their ideal. That great master of the art of war himself said that ‘in war moral forces were to material forces as three to one.’ It is true that by ‘moral’ Napoleon did not exactly mean ‘ethical’; but the ethical is an essential part of the moral. Germany forgets—or inverts—the ethical; and that is the most fatal of blunders. For, as Carlyle teaches, this is a world of facts, and the first condition of success in any realm is fidelity to facts. And certainly the most important kinds of ‘facts’ are in the ethical order. They have the quality of eternity in them. This world has been so constructed by its Maker that a falsehood is in quarrel with the very system of things, and the Prussianised Germany, which has set the world in a flame with its greeds, and hates, and envies, is fighting against the ‘system of things.’

We, on our part, have greater allies than the nations knitted to us by formal treaties. With the change of a single word we can adopt Wordsworth’s memorable lines:

‘ . . . Thou hast great allies,
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And Love, and man’s unconquerable mind.’

But in this war we have still mightier allies than these. All the forces that make for truth, for humanity, for honour, for justice, for freedom, are our allies. These are the enduring forces of the universe; and the Maker and Ruler of these forces, of whose character they are the reflex and of whose will they are the servants, is on our side too.

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